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EIGHT SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR 1780,

AT THE LECTURE FOUNDED BY THE LATE

REV. AND PIOUS JOHN BAMPTON, M. A.

CANON OF SALISBURY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A VINDICATION OF ST. PAUL

From the Charge of wiſhing himſelf accurſed,

A SERMON

PREACHED LIKEWISE BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY, ON SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 1778.

By JAMES BANDINEL, D.D.

OF JESUS COLLEGE, AND PUBLIC ORATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY.

THE SECOND EDITION:

LONDON.

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1796.

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Imprimatur,

GEO. HORNE,

Mar. 6. 1780. Vice-Can. Oxon.

TO THE REVEREND

THE HEADS OF COLLEGES;

THESE SERMONS,

PREACHED

AT THEIR APPOINTMENT,

ARE,

WITH RESPECT

AND AFFECTION,

DEDICATED.

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Extract from the laſt Will and Teſtament of the late Rev. JOHN BAMPTON, *Canon of* Saliſbury.

—— " I give and bequeath my Lands " and Eſtates to the Chancellor, Maſters, " and Scholars of the Univerſity of Ox- " ford for ever, to have and to hold all " and ſingular the ſaid Lands or Eſtates " upon truſt, and to the intents and pur- " poſes hereinafter mentioned; that is to " ſay, I will and appoint, that the Vice- " Chancellor of the Univerſity of Oxford " for the time being ſhall take and re- " ceive all the rents, iſſues, and profits " thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations, " and neceſſary deductions made) that he " pay all the remainder to the endow- " ment of eight Divinity Lecture Ser- " mons, to be eſtabliſhed for ever in the " ſaid Univerſity, and to be performed in " the manner following:

" I direct and appoint, that, upon the " firſt Tueſday in Eaſter Term, a Lec-

" turer be yearly choſen by the Heads of
" Colleges only, and by no others, in the
" room adjoining to the Printing-Houſe,
" between the hours of ten in the morn-
" ing and two in the afternoon, to preach
" eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the
" year following, at St. Mary's in Ox-
" ford, between the commencement of
" the laſt month in Lent Term, and the
" end of the third week in Act Term.

" Alſo I direct and appoint, that the
" eight Divinity Lecture Sermons ſhall be
" preached upon either of the following
" ſubjects—to confirm and eſtabliſh the
" Chriſtian Faith, and to confute all he-
" retics and ſchiſmatics—upon the divine
" authority of the Holy Scriptures—upon
" the authority of the writings of the
" primitive Fathers as to the faith and
" practice of the primitive Church—
" upon the Divinity of our Lord and Sa-
" viour Jeſus Chriſt—upon the Divinity
" of the Holy Ghoſt—upon the Articles
" of the Chriſtian Faith, as comprehend-
" ed in the Apoſtles' and Nicene Creeds.

" Alſo

" Alſo I direct, that thirty copies of " the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons " ſhall be always printed, within two " months after they are preached, and " one copy ſhall be given to the Chan- " cellor of the Univerſity, and one copy " to the Head of every College, and one " copy to the Mayor of the City of Ox- " ford, and one copy to be put into the " Bodleian Library; and the expence of " printing them ſhall be paid out of the " revenue of the Lands or Eſtates given " for eſtabliſhing the Divinity Lecture " Sermons; and the Preacher ſhall not be " paid, nor be entitled to the revenue, " before they are printed.

" Alſo I direct and appoint, that no " perſon ſhall be qualified to preach the " Divinity Lecture Sermons, unleſs he " hath taken the Degree of Maſter of " Arts at leaſt, in one of the two Uni- " verſities of Oxford or Cambridge; and " that the ſame perſon ſhall never preach " the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice."

The clear income of Mr. Bampton's *eſtate amounts to about* 120*l.* per ann.

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SER-

SERMON I.

PHILIPP. iv. 8.

Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe; think on theſe things.

THIS Epiſtle does not, like many others written by our Apoſtle, conſiſt of cenſure and reproof for corrupt doctrines and vicious practices: it abounds on the contrary with expreſſions and teſtimonies not only of fervent affection, but likewiſe chearful confidence. This honourable diſtinction the *Philippians* certainly had deſerved on account of their

zeal for St. *Paul* and the part they took in his ſufferings, adminiſtering to his wants and relieving his neceſſities: but they had a ſtill higher claim to it by their fortitude in various conflicts with the adverſaries of Chriſt, their conſtancy in the faith, and ſtedfaſtneſs in the defence and maintenance of the goſpel. This he acknowledges with joy and pride; to his commendations for ſo illuſtrious an example of fidelity adding nothing but tender and powerful exhortations to preſerve their character by the ſame firm and reſolute adherence to the truth, and a generous ambition of excelling in the genuine [a] *fruits of righteouſneſs which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the glory and praiſe of God.*

The ſame teſtimony of affection and confidence, the ſame acknowledgement of zeal, commendation for fidelity, and exhortation to a ſteady continuance in piety and virtue is evidently implied in the preference, by which that worthy perſon (to fulfill whoſe pious intentions we are this day aſſembled) has diſtinguiſhed thoſe,

[a] *Phil.* i. 11.

whom

whom he has appointed the diſpenſers of his munificence for the general improvement of the whole houſehold of God.

This ſpiritual relation, which I truſt in God holds good between St. *Paul's* favourite Church and thoſe ſelect members of our own whom I am now addreſſing, has naturally led me in my entrance upon this honourable truſt to have a more particular attention to this epiſtle; of which the paſſage I have choſen for my text is the cloſe and epilogue; the compendium and ſummary of the whole: in which are contained all duties, *ſpeculative* and *practical*; *truth*, the foundation; *the moral virtues with their concomitant graces*, the ſuperſtructure and ornament of the chriſtian edifice.

Truth conſidered in oppoſition to error having its ſeat in the *ſpeculative* is (at leaſt in the order of our apprehenſion) antecedent to, and therefore very juſtly placed by our Apoſtle at, the head of every excellence that can be the object of the *practical* intellect. It is the criterion by which

religion is distinguished from mere morality, the cause and the basis of genuine virtue and piety; which are the natural, I had almost said necessary, consequence of duly apprehending the nature and the laws of God: and herein the great dignity of truth appears, that it is so intimately connected with that which forms the perfection and distinguishing character of man. Of all the inhabitants of the earth man alone is capable of religion; to worship God is his prerogative [b]; and in order to this great and glorious purpose God created him in his own image, and communicated (if I may so speak) more of himself to him than to any other part of this creation, plainly intimating that as without the faculties of reason and intellect man could not be *capable of religion*, so without a due exercise of those faculties he cannot be truly said to be *religious*. If this principle is wanting, there can be no solid ground whereon to fix a right practice; all our fairest actions must lose their uniformity, beauty, and excellence; the whole

[b] Ex tot generibus nullum est animal præter hominem quod habeat notitiam aliquam Dei. *Cicero de Leg.* l. 1. 18.

fabric

fabric of religion muſt tumble, being deprived of that ſupport which alone can give it ſtability; becauſe truth being founded on the nature of God muſt be, like its author and original, eternal and immutable[c], *the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.*

No man yet arrived to that degree of abſurdity in wickedneſs as to deny that it is our duty to act according to our *knowledge*; and ſurely the very ſame reaſon, which makes knowledge the rule of our actions, makes it likewiſe our duty to take all proper methods of acquiring that knowledge, that we may have a ſure and firm foundation whereon to build both our faith and practice. We are indeed told by the church of *Rome*, in excuſe of that ſpiritual tyranny which it has ſet up over the minds of men, that *ignorance is the mother of devotion*; but the fatal experience of many centuries muſt have convinced ſuch even of its own members, as are not totally blinded by prejudice, that it has given birth only to ſuperſtition and infidelity, offſprings well worthy of ſuch a pa-

[c] *Heb.* xiii. 8.

rent. God has given us reaſon that we might be influenced by rational motives: without them our belief however true, our worſhip however pure, cannot properly be called religious; becauſe they want that conſtitutive principle which, rendering man alone capable of religion, renders him likewiſe inexcuſable if he neglects thoſe communications of himſelf which God offers him, and obſtinately refuſes to employ his faculties in the ſearch of ſpiritual truth, the nature of God, his perfections, and eternal will, the only certain and unerring rule of worſhip. Ignorance under the means of knowledge, whether careleſs or preſumptuous, ſo far from being an excuſe is an aggravation of guilt: it argues a graceleſs diſpoſition, abdicates the dignity of human nature, diſappoints the purpoſe which the Almighty aimed at in our creation, deſpiſes his honour, and renounces his authority.

Thus in reſpect of God do both our *duty and gratitude* oblige us to a free and impartial enquiry into the principles upon which religion is built; I ſay, *free and impartial*;

impartial; for no enquiry can be ſucceſſful where the reaſoning faculties are under any controul from within or without; and it is that very freedom of thinking which makes an intellectual agent reſponſible for his opinions, as freedom of acting makes a moral one reſponſible for his actions: the true liberty of both conſiſts in hearkening to the dictates of reaſon, in a clear unbiaſſed judgement, and in a power of acting conformably thereunto; and this liberty they both part with, whenever they ſuffer their will to be directed by any other than its natural and proper motive, which is a right underſtanding: for then reaſon is dethroned, their paſſions govern them even againſt their judgement, and they become ſlaves to falſe appearances, to error, prejudice, and obſtinacy.

To ſuffer ſuch an abuſe of our faculties is not only ingratitude and treaſon againſt God, but *injuſtice to ourſelves*, a violence done to our nature, whoſe frame and conſtitution is admirably adapted to the reception and entertainment of truth. It is

often by a beautiful and juſt metaphor called the food of the mind; becauſe it nouriſhes and invigorates its faculties, and being homogeneous is eaſily aſſimilated and converted into its very nature and ſubſtance. All other creatures appear to employ their powers upon that which tends to the improvement and perfection of their being. Man feels an active flame within his breaſt which is conſtantly urging him on in the purſuit after knowledge. Can he then juſtify to himſelf the perverſion or even the neglect of this the nobleſt of all principles? ought it not to be employed about the nobleſt object? and what object can be ſo noble as the higheſt and moſt excellent of all beings, his glorious perfections, the different relations we ſtand in to him, and the obligations which ariſe from thoſe relations upon all intelligent beings? The variety and ſublimity of the truths and their real importance and univerſal concernment to the well-being of man all concur to recommend this ſtudy. It is beyond all analogy infinitely ſuperior to every other ſcience: the object is God himſelf, the father of light, the fountain

of

of all knowledge; and the end of it the glory of God and the happineſs of man. This laſt circumſtance adds great weight to the motives already mentioned, and greatly enhances not only the *propriety* but alſo the *neceſſity* of our being ſolicitous and diligent in our endeavours to ſatisfy ourſelves about the evidence, the grounds, and principles of religion.

[d] That there are in the nature of things ſuch principles I take for granted; the notion of a God is univerſal, and that it was not ſtamped upon man merely to be the ſubject of curious and idle ſpeculation, is evident from that natural diſpoſition to worſhip him which is as univerſal as the notion. Hence aroſe the conceit of the Jews, that man was created on the eve of the ſabbath, that he might begin his being with the worſhip of his creator: and even the idolatry of the heathen world clearly owed its riſe to this original impreſſion

[d] Omnes tamen eſſe vim & naturam divinam arbitrantur. Nec verò id collocutio hominum aut conſenſus efficit; non inſtitutis opinio eſt confirmata, non legibus. Omni autem in re conſenſio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda eſt. *Cicer. Tuſc. quæſt.* l. 1. c. 13.

however

however perverted, to a conviction however misapplied, of this natural duty. They could not totally raze out, but they defaced and disfigured the characters of God written upon the soul; they did not deny his being, but worshipped the creature [e] παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα *beside* or *in conjunction with* the creator. This subject has been so copiously handled, and the being and providence of God so fully and undeniably proved by many learned and pious men, that I hold it altogether needless to enter into a tedious repetition, or attempt a new arrangement of their arguments. Why should I dwell, especially before this audience, on the harmony, preservation, and symmetry of the whole universe, the wonderful fabrick of our bodies, and the still more wonderful faculties of our souls, when our imperfections themselves lead us by an easy and plain inference to an irrefragable proof of our dependance upon a superior being? for as the idea of self-existence necessarily excludes all imperfections, whatever is imperfect must have some higher cause, which insensibly leads us to the au-

[e] *Rom.* i. 25.

thor

thor of all beings, who has no cauſe without himſelf. As I have therefore hitherto argued, ſo ſhall I continue to argue, without a formal diſcuſſion of what I think ought to be aſſumed as an axiom in philoſophy; not only becauſe to require a proof of that, of which our very being is a demonſtration, implies ſomething not unlike an abſurdity; but likewiſe becauſe revelation, which is to be the ſubject of theſe diſcourſes, neceſſarily includes within it the idea of a God to grant that revelation; the truth of which being proved, by the ſame arguments will of courſe be proved the exiſtence and divinity of its author.

As the idea of a God is included in that of a revelation, ſo will I not ſcruple to affirm that a divine revelation is a neceſſary conſequence of the exiſtence of God. It ſeems (with reverence be it ſpoken) altogether inconſiſtent with either the wiſdom or goodneſs of God to have made moral agents without preſcribing them ſome law, to require worſhip and ſervices without ſome declaration or information, however conveyed, of the worſhip and ſervices which would

would be accepted; for theſe the nobleſt and moſt uſeful parts of knowledge, and conſequently the moſt neceſſary and fit to be learned, as they are ſtiled by Plato, [f] *no man* (adds the ſame philoſopher) *can teach except he be firſt taught of God.* If therefore unaſſiſted reaſon is unequal to this taſk (and the authority of ſo great a maſter of reaſon is ſurely in this caſe concluſive) it is more than probable that God did not leave our firſt parent, in a ſtate of darkneſs and uncertainty, expoſed to all the miſeries which ſpring from ignorance and error; but originally gave him ſome rule of life, diſcovered to him by immediate revelation all the neceſſary truths of what is called natural religion. If theſe truths and the duties reſulting from them came in proceſs of time by whatever accident to be forgotten, the expediency of a ſupernatural information recurs; for as in *corporeal*, ſo likewiſe in *ſpiritual* blindneſs, when the faculty of ſight is entirely loſt, no power

[f] Ἀλλ' ἐδ' ἂν διδάξειεν εἰ μὴ Θεὸς ὑφηγῆτο. *Epinom.* There are many paſſages of the ſame import interſperſed in all his works; particularly *in the fourth book De Rep. Apol. Socrat.* and the *Phædo.*

ſhort

ſhort of omnipotence is equal to the renewal of it: it is a new creation; for from total privation to abſolute reſtoration, the diſtance is the ſame as from non-entity to exiſtence: and, whenever God pleaſes to interpoſe, the ſame obedience which was due to the firſt, is due likewiſe to every ſubſequent declaration of his will, the validity of each being derived from the ſame authority. Whoever therefore believes in God, being under a natural obligation of conforming to his will when known, is neceſſarily bound to enquire whether he has given any particular revelation of it, and conſequently, when there are pretenſions to it, to examine ſeriouſly and impartially the evidences upon which ſuch pretenſions are grounded. The neceſſity of ſome information more than human we have ſeen acknowledged by Plato, and many other paſſages to the ſame purpoſe might have been adduced out of his writings, as well as thoſe of his great *Roman* interpreter. The account indeed, which the latter gives us of the abſurdity and impiety of both the *philoſophical* and *religious* tenets of his time, renders it highly

highly probable upon principles of mere reaſon that God, whoſe mercy is over all his works, would interfere in behalf of his creatures, reſtore primitive truth, and reſcue religion from ſuperſtition and idolatry.

That the divine interpoſition is not contrary to our natural notions is evident from a common opinion, which prevailed in all ages and countries, that their founders and legiſlators had conferences with, and received inſtructions from, ſome ſuperior being; whoſe authority they pleaded for both their political and religious inſtitutions. Theſe teſtimonies unbelievers, thoſe at leaſt who aſſume to themſelves the venerable name of philoſophers, would do well to conſider before they diſmiſs Chriſtianity in their uſual diſingenuous manner, without examining into its pretenſions, nay without even giving it a hearing, upon the bare ſuppoſition that a revelation from God is at beſt incredible if not impoſſible. Its pretenſions ſurely entitle it to more civility and reſpect.

Without

[g] *Without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs:* great are the bleſſings which it promiſes, great the knowledge which it profeſſes to teach, the knowledge of God and of ourſelves, the eternal principles of truth, the duties reſulting from thoſe principles, and the proper motives and encouragements to enforce thoſe duties. It tenders to loſt mankind, who lay under the breach and yet under the bond of the covenant of works, terms of reconciliation, pardon, and peace: God's law was broken, his will diſobeyed, his name diſhonoured; and yet he propitiates, he expiates our ſins againſt himſelf, he receives us into favour again, he grants us his word to direct and his grace to aſſiſt us in the performance of our duty, which performance he promiſes to reward with eternal happineſs in a better world. Doctrines theſe of no mean and trivial importance, of no inferior and ſubordinate kind; to which Chriſtianity moreover demands our attention for the ſake, and under the authority, of the everlaſting God who dictated and his eternal ſon who publiſhed them.

[g] 1 *Tim.* iii. 16.

Under

Under ſuch ſanction no wonder that it aſſumes the emphatical name of *truth*; that it is ſtiled by way of eminence [h] *the word of truth*, [i] *the truth of God*; that the belief and the knowledge of it are called [k] *the belief and the* [l] *knowledge of the truth*; that they who profeſs it are ſaid [m] *to be of the truth*, and they that reject it [n] *not to believe*, [o] *not to obey the truth*. Claims of ſo high a nature and of ſo great importance to man, made ſo ſeriouſly, deſerve ſurely to be ſeriouſly conſidered and carefully examined; leſt haply, through our wilful neglect and indifference, we be found to ſlight God's gifts, ſuſpect his goodneſs, call his truth and of courſe all his eſſential perfections into queſtion; for whoſoever deſpiſes a law caſts diſhonour upon the authority that enjoins it.

How juſtly *Chriſtianity* appropriates to itſelf the title of truth cannot but appear to every unprejudiced mind that conſiders

[h] *Epheſ.* i. 3, &c. [i] *Rom.* iii. 7, &c. [k] 2 *Theſſal.* ii. 13. [l] 1 *Tim.* ii. 4, &c. [m] 1 *John* iii. 19. [n] 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 12. [o] *Rom.* ii. 8.

it

it in oppoſition to both the falſhood of *paganiſm* and to the promiſes and ſhadows of *judaiſm*. With regard to the *pagan religion* (if an ill-contrived texture of inconſiſtent impoſtures can be called by ſo ſacred a name) little pains need be taken to ſhew the vanity and the folly of it, ſince even [p] from among thoſe who profeſſed it there are not wanting men, and thoſe of ſuperior knowledge and underſtanding, who teſtify their diſlike and contempt of thoſe ridiculous and beaſtly fables upon which their theology and worſhip depended. They diſſembled indeed and outwardly complied out of policy and fear; or, if a higher motive may be aſſigned for their compliance [q], it was by no means (as they themſelves acknowledged) an opinion that it was acceptable to the

[p] Hæc et dicuntur et creduntur ſtultiſſimè, et plena ſunt futilitatis ſummæque levitatis. *Cicer. de nat. Deor.* l. 2.

[q] Quæ omnia ſapiens ſervabit tanquam legibus juſſa non tanquam diis grata. *Seneca apud Auguſt. de civit. Dei.* l. 6. 10.

Retinetur autem et ad opinionem vulgi et ad magnas utilitates reipublicæ mos, religio, diſciplina, jus augurum, collegii auctoritas. *Cicer. de divin.* l. 2. Δεῖ φυλάσσειν τὰ εἰς κοινὸν κεκυρωμένα.—πυσραλύειν ἐχ ὅσιον τὰ ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατὰ τόπυς νενομισμένα. *Celſ. apud Orig.* l. 5.

deity, but only political intereſt and a reſpect which they thought due to the laws and cuſtoms of their country. It ſeems indeed of all paradoxes the leaſt reconcileable to the human mind, how man not totally diveſted of reaſon could believe in and pay adoration to ſuch a ridiculous and contemptible rabble of deities, terreſtrial and infernal as well as celeſtial, male and female, guilty of fornication, adultery, inceſt, and every unnatural luſt; thieves, drunkards, murderers, parricides: nay ſome worſhipped even brute beaſts of the loweſt and vileſt kind, things without life, without being; the produce of their gardens, the diſeaſes of their bodies, the paſſions and vices of their minds. Theſe they numbered among things venerable and divine; to theſe they dedicated temples, and offered ſacrifices with ſuch ſuperſtitious devotion, ſuch filthy and inhuman rites, as were ſuitable to the objects of their worſhip. From ſuch unſeemly notions what glory to God or benefit to man could accrue? Such opinions and practices reſpecting religion (one of the firſt principles of which is to imitate the deity)

deity) muſt neceſſarily produce ſimilar opinions and practices with regard to morality: and that this was really the caſe, is abundantly evinced by their own writers, ſuch in particular as lived about the beginning of Chriſtianity; whoſe accounts of the horrid depravation of manners bear ample teſtimony to that ſhocking catalogue of abominable vices, with which the gentiles are charged by St. *Paul* in the beginning of his epiſtle to the *Romans*. Some indeed of the philoſophers were not entirely ignorant of the leading principles of natural religion; yet what did all their ſtudies, all their enquiries and diſputations produce except uncertainty, diſſatisfaction, and perplexity; inſtead of full conviction, ſome faint conjecture; in the room of ſolid perſuaſion, unſteady and irreconcileable variety of opinion? *Varro* who was called the wiſeſt of the Romans, reckons up (as he is quoted by [r] St. *Auſtin*) two hundred and eighty eight different ſentiments concerning happineſs, and [s] *Themiſtius* tells the emperor *Valens*, that there

[r] *De civit. Dei.* l. 19. 1. [s] *Sozomen.* l. 6. 36.

were above three hundred jarring opinions among the philoſophers of Greece; no wonder therefore that [t] *Maximus Tyrius* acknowledges himſelf at a loſs which of the ſchools to follow, under which of the innumerable ſects of philoſophers to enliſt. Being ſcholars of nature only, their knowledge could reach no farther than what nature taught: ſo far therefore were they from having a perfect rule of life, an entire ſyſtem of either divinity or morality, that "[u] about theſe things neither nation "agreed with nation, nor city with city, "nor family with family, nor one man "with another, nor any one with him-"ſelf."

What a different ſcene does the *goſpel of Chriſt* exhibit! God has impreſſed upon it ſignatures of himſelf, characters that plainly evince its divine origin. The *ſpeculative* part repreſents God to us as a being abſolutely free from all imperfec-

[t] *Diſſert.* 19. *Edit. Oxon.* which concludes with theſe remarkable words ὁρᾷς τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἡγεμόνων· ὁρᾷς τὸ πλῆθος τῶν συνθημάτων· ᾧ τις τρέπηται; ποῖον αὐτῶν καταδέξωμαι; τίνι πεισθῶ τῶν παραγγελμάτων;

[u] *Id. Diſſert.* 1.

tions

tions and poſſeſſed of all perfections whatſoever in the higheſt degree; it aſcribes to him every thing that is great and glorious, good and amiable. The worſhip it enjoins is ſuitable to the idea of ſo excellent and pure a deity: it conſiſts of an awful ſenſe of his majeſty and our dependence upon him, love of his perfections, faith in his veracity, gratitude for his benefits, recourſe to his goodneſs, frequent meditations upon him, communion with him, and an inward deſire to pleaſe him. Theſe things are required to be performed by us with fervency and zeal, with reverence, humility, and ſincerity.—[w] *God is a ſpirit, and they that worſhip him muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.* With this ſuperior excellence of the ſpeculative part of our religion the *practical* entirely agrees. It is not, like the morality taught in the ſchools of the heathen, made up of ſhreds and patches, modelled according to the different genius and intereſt of different ſtates and ages, furniſhing in one century perhaps one truth and in another century

[w] *John* iv. 24.

another truth: It is one ſimple, uniform, and perfect rule of life; built upon the moſt ſolid foundation, the authority of God and our obedience to his will; it is ſuited to all times and all places, productive of the univerſal good of every human ſociety. The laws which it enjoins proceed not from mere power and authority, but are evidently acts of wiſdom and goodneſs. There is no precept delivered, no duty recommended, but what is highly rational and uſeful, worthy of God and beneficial to man; from the obſervance of them will naturally reſult peace and tranquillity of mind, good will from all men, and the favour and acceptance of God; who to our ſincere though imperfect obedience has been moreover graciouſly pleaſed to annex the glorious promiſe of *joys*, ſuch [x] *as eye has not ſeen, ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive*. Theſe doctrines are peculiar to Chriſtianity; philoſophy never taught them in her ſchools, neither are they to be read in the book of nature; for, after

[x] 1 *Cor.* ii. 9.

all

all the glorious things which are ſpoken of reaſon, it never furniſhed mankind with more than a bare ſurmiſe of futurity, a feeble hope of that [y] *moſt deſirable thing which* Seneca obſerves *their great men promiſed, but could not prove:* It is revelation alone that can improve conjecture into knowledge, and doubt into certainty.

Thus does the *goſpel of Chriſt* in oppoſition to *paganiſm* claim the title of *truth* on account of the intrinſic excellence and ſublimity of its doctrines. It moreover challenges it with reſpect to the *jewiſh religion*; it is the body of its ſhadows, the ſubſtance of its figures, the completion of its promiſes. And here a new ſcene opens, a comprehenſive view of a vaſt, uniform, and conſiſtent plan; which could not be carried on under different diſpenſations for ſuch a length of time, with the utmoſt analogy and harmony, by any thing leſs than the fore-knowledge and providence of God. Every part of the moſaical

y Credebam opinionibus magnorum virorum rem gratiſſimam promittentium magis quam probantium. *Senec. Ep.* 102. See *Whitby* upon 2 *Tim.* i. 10.

oeconomy was typical of that more perfect one, which was to be eſtabliſhed when [z] *the Lord would make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael*, when [a] *the figures for the time* then *preſent*, [b] *the ſhadows of things to come*, were to have their accompliſhment in *Chriſt*, the true ark [c] *in whom dwelleth all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily*, as it did *ſymbolically* in the tabernacle and afterwards in the temple; the true mercy-ſeat [d], *through which God ſhews himſelf gracious to his people*; the true paſchal lamb [e], *whoſe blood protects us from the deſtroying angel*; the true piacular victim [f], *whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation for the remiſſion of ſins*; the true high prieſt [g], *who having obtained an eternal redemption, is not entered into the holy places made with hands which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itſelf now to appear in the preſence of God for us*. Theſe are but few out of the numberleſs typical analogies which might be produced; yet ſufficient, I truſt, to ſhew that the foundations of the goſpel were

[z] *Jer.* xxxi. 31. [a] *Heb.* viii. 9. [b] *Coloſſ.* ii. 17.
[c] *Coloſſ.* ii. 9. [d] *Exod.* xx, &c. [e] *Exod.* xii.
[f] *Rom.* iii. 25. [g] *Heb.* ix. 12, 24.

laid

laid in the law. [h] Every part of the *ritual* worſhip bore an emblematical relation to the *ſpiritual* one which was to ſucceed it; every external diſpenſation of Providence to the Jews had a myſtical reſpect to the everlaſting covenant with all nations, and the whole people was figurative of the ſpiritual *Iſrael* or the church of the *Meſſiah*, who was ſhadowed forth to them under types and ceremonies; the amazing correſpondency of which with that diſpenſation, which they prefigured ſo many ages before its appearance, clearly demonſtrates them to have been the effect not of chance but of wiſdom, power, and foreſight, and fully ratifies and confirms the veracity of God [i] *whoſe promiſes in Chriſt are yea and amen.*

Here let us pauſe awhile to admire how God is pleaſed to accommodate the operations of his grace to the courſe of nature. Nothing arrives to its full age and maturity but by gentle ſucceſſive degrees. Even man himſelf, the Lord of the creation, comes

[h] See *Berriman's Sermons at Boyle's Lecture.*
[i] 2 *Cor.* i. 20.

on

on ſlowly to his perfection through the imbecility of childhood and the defects of youth. Analogous to this order of things he brought us to the day-light of the goſpel through the dark night of paganiſm and the twilight of the law. When he took his church from under the hand of nature, he trained and tutored it in elements fitted for a weak capacity; elements of a ſenſible and material nature, yet ſo admirably contrived as to be emblematical of that true ſpiritual doctrine, the ſplendor of which being too ſtrong for its infancy was veiled at firſt under the cloud of the moſaical adminiſtration, but in fulneſs of time brought to light by the goſpel.

[k] It is an objection as old as the time of *Celſus* (which, however falſe and repeatedly ſhewn to be ſuch, has yet never failed to be urged with great confidence by all his ſucceſſors in infidelity) that Chriſtianity debars its profeſſors from all enquiries about religious truths, and demands of them a full and implicit aſſent without a previous

[k] Μὴ ἐξέταζε ἀλλὰ πίστευσον. *Origen.* L. 1.

exami-

examination of the ground on which they are to build that aſſent. But ſurely never was objection raiſed upon ſo ſlight a foundation. Chriſtianity with a candour peculiar to itſelf earneſtly ſolicits a trial at the bar of reaſon, invites and exhorts every man, before he embraces its doctrines, fairly and impartially to examine its pretenſions. [l] *Prove all things*, ſays St. *Paul*, *hold faſt that which is good*. When St. *John* warns us againſt believing every ſpirit, and bids us [m] *try the ſpirits whether they are of God*, does he not plainly recommend the uſe of our own underſtanding againſt a blind implicit belief? Is not the ſame advice fairly implied in the commendation given to the *Bereans* for [n] *ſearching the ſcriptures* and enquiring into the truth of what the apoſtles preached? And does not our Saviour himſelf inculcate the ſame doctrine when he appeals to the judgement of his adverſaries, [o] *Why do ye not even of yourſelves judge what is right?*

Falſhood indeed and error delight in darkneſs; there is ſomething in them ſo

[l] *Theſſ.* v. 21. [m] 1 *Ep.* iv. 1. [n] *Acts* xvii. 11.
[o] *Luke* xii. 57.

diſguſtful

diſguſtful and contemptible that they muſt keep at a diſtance, out of ſight, if they mean to acquire love or reverence. Hence the myſteries of the heathen were ſurrounded on all ſides by a thick impenetrable veil: they were practiſed in the night; none were admitted to them but under a ſolemn and dreadful oath of ſecrecy: whoever diſcloſed any part of them was excluded from all the rights and benefits of civil ſociety, he was apprehended as a public offender and ſuffered death. On the contrary nothing diſhonours *truth* ſo much as concealment: the more it is ſeen the more awful and lovely it appears; *its tabernacle is placed in the ſun*, it never looks ſo glorious as when it ſhines in full meridian ſplendor. While therefore the founders and diſpenſers of fabulous religions and abſurd worſhip cover them under ſilence and obſcurity, the Goſpel in ſtrict conformity to its character, profeſſedly reveals myſteries; *Chriſt*, ſo far from enjoining ſecrecy to his apoſtles, exhorts them to a free profeſſion and open publication of his doſtrines. [p] *What*

[p] *Matt.* x. 27.

I ſay

I ſay to you in darkneſs, ſpeak ye in the light; i. e. the doctrines which I teach you in parables do ye publickly explain and expound. *What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the houſe-tops*; i. e. what I more privately impart to you, do ye courageouſly publiſh and proclaim to all the world. This fair and candid proceeding ought, one would imagine, to procure at leaſt a favourable hearing; and how little Chriſtianity declines, nay how truly it affects and courts, the verdict of unbiaſſed reaſon might juſtly be collected (were the more direct proofs we have juſt urged wanting) from its making its appearance in the brighteſt day of human knowledge. Had it been conſcious of its own weakneſs, it would not thus boldly have entered the liſts againſt the prejudices of mankind, when the great improvement and increaſe of all kinds of literature had excited a noble ſpirit of curioſity, which not only prompted men to enquire after, but qualified them to underſtand and examine truth and detect fraud and impoſture. But in this as well as other reſpects [q] *wiſdom has*

[q] *Matth.* xi. 19.

been

been juſtified of her Children. [r] When the books written by *Numa* the father of the Roman religion, and by him ordered to be buried under ground, were accidentally found four hundred years after; his motives for the religious eſtabliſhment, which he impoſed upon the credulity of a rude illiterate nation, appeared to a more enlightened age ſo trivial and frivolous, that they were burned by a public decree of the ſenate:

The *impoſture of Mahomet* as well as the *pagan idolatry* aroſe in times of general corruption, ignorance, and barbariſm; but *Chriſtianity*, the ſyſtem of that worſhip which comes recommended with the character of truth, has conſtantly kept pace with knowledge; it appeared when the ſciences were arrived at their higheſt perfection, grew by the aids of learning, has decayed and revived with it; it has conſtantly appealed to reaſon, and from every trial upon that teſt has as conſtantly acquired freſh ſtrength, credit, and authority.

This confidence, as has been obſerved, is peculiar to Chriſtianity, and perfectly agree-

[r] *Varro apud Auguſt. de civit. Dei* vii 24.

able

able to the character of *truth*; which, like its ſymbol in the material world, chearfully ſpreading its rays over the whole univerſe, is hid from none but thoſe who wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt it. But, leſt too great a torrent of light immediately ſucceeding thick darkneſs might oppreſs the intellectual ſight, the wiſdom and the goodneſs of God previouſly prepared mankind for that gracious diſpenſation which he intended them, and made the knowledge of the *law* the forerunner of the knowledge of the *goſpel* even among the gentiles. The books of the *old* teſtament, in which the *new* is virtually involved, being (not without the conduct of providence) tranſlated ſome ages before into Greek the then general language, the treaſures of the *jewiſh* and conſequently the *chriſtian* religion were laid open to other nations as well as the Jews, and gradually diſpoſed them the more readily to receive that great prophet and ſaviour of mankind; who had been ſo often and ſo plainly foretold in prophecies, which they themſelves knew to have been

[a] See *univerſal hiſtory* V. 10. p. 244.

written

written many centuries before their completion.

And now let the infidel (who exclaims againſt chriſtianity as requiring a groundleſs faith and obtruding itſelf upon men in the dark) ſearch the records of antiquity and diſcover, if he can, another religion that contains doctrines equally worthy of God, precepts equally conducive to the good of man; a religion, that confiding in the merits of its cauſe invites men to make uſe of their beſt underſtanding; a religion, that appeals to the principles of another religion then in being in all appearance totally different from itſelf; yet when ſurveyed together with it forming a beautiful, regular, and compleat ſyſtem, carried on through ſucceſſive ages and periods with an analogy ſurpriſingly harmonious and uniform: a religion moreover, that, to remove all ſuſpicion of impoſture, communicates the knowledge of the law on which it is founded ſome hundred years before its appearance, and at laſt fully diſcovers itſelf at a time when the intellectual improvements of mankind enable them thoroughly

to

to examine and judge of the truth of its pretenſions.

Till this is done (and that it cannot be done we may fairly infer from its having never been attempted) we cannot forego the excluſive claim which Chriſtianity has to the ſacred name of *truth*, and of courſe to our ſerious, diligent, and impartial attention, even upon theſe preſumptive proofs of its proceeding from God.

That it did really proceed from God we have, I truſt, good and ſufficient evidence; and this with his aſſiſtance ſhall be the ſubject of the following diſcourſe.

SERMON II.

ROM. x. 14, 15.

How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how ſhall they hear without a preacher? and how ſhall they preach, except they be ſent?

ALTHOUGH the arguments produced in the preceding diſcourſe might to ſome appear fully ſufficient to juſtify the claim which the goſpel makes to the title of truth; yet as that kind of reaſoning, which ariſes from the nature and intrinſic excellence of a doctrine, is by

others looked upon as inconclusive; I think it not improper (in order to obviate all objections) to enquire into some at least of the *external* evidence, by which this *internal* one is supported. And in truth, after all that has been said in favour of each of these methods, they seem to me to stand mutually in need of each others assistance. A revelation opposite to the principles of nature and the reason of things is a contradiction in terms; and therefore no external evidence whatsoever can establish the divinity of a religion, which carries within it such unquestionable proofs of a different origin; neither are the interior marks of truth, though necessary and inseparable characters, absolute and infallible proofs of an immediate revelation. But when both conspire together; when to the testimony, which a religion itself bears to its own authority, is added every external one which circumstances require, supported by such proofs as the nature of the thing will admit, nothing but obstinacy can withold its assent, scepticism becomes folly, incredulity a sin.

As

As therefore not only the principles and doctrines of the Chriſtian divinity, but likewiſe the external proofs by which they are confirmed, are contained in the books of the *old* and *new teſtament*; I flatter myſelf I cannot better engage your attention, or more faithfully diſcharge the truſt repoſed in me, than by firſt eſtabliſhing the truth and authority of the ſcriptures; becauſe upon them the truth and authority of our holy religion ultimately depend: for the authenticity of the hiſtory being acknowledged, and the facts which are therein recorded being granted, the teſtimony of *miracles* and *prophecies* joined to the *excellence of the doctrines* is a clear and compleat demonſtration of our Saviour's divine commiſſion; by them God atteſts the whole oeconomy of grace to be an immediate revelation from heaven as certainly as that he cannot lie or give his approbation to a lie.

Before I enter upon particular proofs, I beg leave to remind you that[a], as the idea

[a] See *page* 11.

of a God conſtantly carries with it the idea of ſome ſervice or worſhip due to him, ſo does it (according to my apprehenſions) neceſſarily ſuppoſe a revelation, a declaration from God of what ſervice and worſhip will be acceptable to him. Knowledge muſt in the courſe of things ever precede obedience; and therefore in every well-regulated ſtate the law is always promulged before the obſervance of it is required. The will of God is the only law for our belief and practice; for who is to preſcribe where God is concerned, except God himſelf? But [b] *who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſellor?* How ſhall we attain at the knowledge of his will, except from himſelf and thoſe to whom he has been pleaſed to reveal it? From this argument St. *Paul* in my text infers the neceſſity of his miſſion to preach the goſpel among the gentiles: it holds good in all caſes, and is a ſtrong preſumption in favour of the ſcriptures; for ſuppoſing a revelation neceſſary, where elſe are we to look for it?

[b] *Rom.* xi. 34.

Where

Where ſhall we find, I will not ſay a *better*, but *another* declaration of the will of God except in thoſe volumes which we receive as the word of God? Is not therefore the conduct of a wilful obſtinate infidel nearly ſimilar to that of a mariner; who in a dark tempeſtuous night, without either compaſs or pilot, ſhould perverſely prefer the perils of an unknown ſea to the ſecurity of the only port that offers itſelf.

But from this *general* argument let us deſcend to *particulars*; premiſing firſt, that there is ſuch a connexion and relation between the two teſtaments, that the ſame proofs illuſtrate and confirm both: the *new* teſtament is founded on the *old*, the *old* accompliſhed in the *new*; the truth of the one being allowed, the truth of the other follows of courſe.

The firſt evidence I ſhall produce in favour of the ſcriptures is their *antiquity*. Of this argument the firſt apologiſts for Chriſtianity make frequent uſe againſt their pagan adverſaries; and with great propriety, for amongſt them the moſt an-

cient acts were reckoned the most authentic. [c] *Apud vos quoque* (says Tertullian) *religionis est instar fidem de temporibus asserere.* *We can* (says [d] Cicero) *support this opinion*, the immortality of the soul, *by the authority of the best writers, which in all cases ought to have and has great weight, but principally by that of all antiquity; which, the nearer it approached to the origin of things and the divine offspring, the better probably did it discern the truth.* In this, as in almost every part of his philosophy, he copies from his grecian master the *atticizing Moses*, as [e] *Numenius* stiles *Plato*; who in his *Philebus* speaking, as many learned interpreters think, of an unity and plurality in the godhead makes uses of the same authority; *the ancients, says he, who were better than us, and dwelt nearer to the*

[c] *Apol.* c. 9.

[d] Auctoribus ad istam sententiam—uti optimis possumus —et primum quidem omni *antiquitate:* quæ quo propius aberat ab ortu et divinâ progenie hoc melius ea fortasse quæ erant vera cernebat. *Tusc. Quæst.* 1. 12. *Plato* in his *Timæus* calls the first men *the offspring and the children of the Gods.*

[e] Νεμήνιος δὲ ὁ Πυθαγόρειος φιλόσοφος ἀττικυρυς γράφει, τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωσῆς ἀττικίζων; *Clem. Alex. Strom.* l. 1. Vide *Suid.* in voce Νεμήνιος.

Gods,

Gods, have tranſmitted down this tradition. The force of this reaſoning is tacitly acknowledged by that univerſal conſent, with which all mankind ſeem to conſpire in paying reſpect and reverence to antiquity. And to this inartificial argument, reaſon readily ſubſcribes; for truth is the eldeſt born of heaven, evidently and of neceſſity prior to falſhood; becauſe falſhood is nothing elſe but a corruption of the truth: and therefore [f] among the characters and criteria of heavenly writings antiquity deſervedly has its place; for from thence they acquire much dignity and authority above all human books and records, [g] which (as has been fully proved by a learned writer of our own) borrowed all their choiceſt notions and contemplations as well natural and moral as divine from the ſacred oracles, in that reſpect bearing teſtimony to the truth of them; and, where they differ, it is but juſt to give credit to the elder who drew their doctrines from the fountain-head.

[g] *Bochart's Phaleg.*
[f] See *Gale's Court of the gentiles.*

I ſhall

I ſhall not pay ſo bad a compliment to this audience as to attempt a laboured proof of the antiquity of *Moſes:* he was in fact prior to moſt of the fabulous deities; and having in his youth converſed with men who were cotemporaries with *Joſeph*, perhaps with *Jacob*, might have had thoſe facts, which he was not an eye witneſs of himſelf, tranſmitted by a regular chain of traditions connected but by very few links with the inhabitants of the antediluvian world. The matter of his hiſtory, and the manner in which it is recorded, ſuit entirely with this antiquity. There is no account in any other writer of the creation or the fall of man; ſomething indeed like the fall is here and there obſcurely hinted; but *Moſes* alone gives us the hiſtory and the cauſe of it. He alone teaches us the age of the world, the origin and diſperſion of mankind, the beginning and ſucceſſion of kingdoms. This account is embelliſhed with no ſhew of learning; it is written with a majeſtic ſecurity, ſhort and plain; as we may well ſuppoſe the firſt memoirs to have been, whilſt

whilſt religion was wiſdom, ſimple truth philoſophy; and therefore [h] *Tatian*, a man well verſed in all kinds of human literature, ingenuouſly acknowledges that one of the chief reaſons of his embracing the chriſtian religion was the rational account he there met with of the creation of all things. *Varro* confeſſes the firſt period of profane hiſtory to be entirely unknown, and the ſecond fabulous; thoſe therefore among the heathens, who treat of primitive antiquity, conceal their ignorance under the ſpecious veil of myſtical allegories; and ſo effectually envelop themſelves within an infinite multitude of incoherent generations, that it is impoſſible for the moſt ſagacious interpreter to trace either their hiſtory or philoſophy. But with *Moſes* there is nothing unknown or fabulous; he is every where clear and conſiſtent, particularly ſpecifies every minute circumſtance as well known and freſh in his memory, and connects all the remarkable periods but by a very few links; which on account of the long lives of the

[h] *Orat. contra Græc.* c. 46.

patriarchs

patriarchs touch each other, and made it very eaſy for his cotemporaries to have detected him, if in facts ſo recent and ſo arranged he had been guilty of any falſhood. Even in thoſe books which were written after the Hebrew volumes had been tranſlated into Greek, and which treat of the *Egyptian*, *Chaldean*, and *Phœnician* antiquities, you have nothing but a heap of undigeſted fables and confuſed traditions for ſome ages ſubſequent to *Moſes* himſelf; and yet the motive of their authors evidently was to prove, in contradiction to *Moſes*, that the Jews were by no means ſuperior in point of age or origin to their reſpective nations; a plain proof of the reſpect which men in general have for antiquity, and how ſtrongly they connect it with the idea of dignity and reverence.

The argument from *antiquity* acquires a very conſiderable degree of ſtrength, when joined to that of *a perpetual and uninterrupted tradition*. To have been in quiet poſſeſſion ſo long is no mean preſumptive proof in favour of the poſſeſſor. The authenticity and authority of the *old teſtament* has been

been allowed by the *Chriſtians* for near two thouſand years; and if we aſcend higher we ſhall find the *Jews univerſally* and without any chaſm acknowledging it for above fourteen hundred years more. Now two people, entirely differing in other reſpects, could not poſſibly have entered into a combination; the appeal therefore, which they both make to *Moſes* and the *prophets*, not only preſuppoſes but is a confirmation of their unqueſtioned veracity. [i] When the deſcendants of *Jacob* left *Egypt*, the men excluſive of the women and children amounted to above *ſix hundred thouſand:* they were all witneſſes of the facts recorded in four of the books written by *Moſes:* Is it credible, is it poſſible, that ſo many perſons could, againſt the teſtimony of their ſenſes, believe the account of numberleſs miracles ſaid to have been performed, and in conſequence of that belief ſubmit to a rigorous and painful law, every part of which was impreſſed with characters of ſeverity and ſervitude? Their ceremonies and ſolemn feſ-

[i] *Exod.* xii. 37. *Numb.* i. 46.

tivals,

tivals, though typically looking forwards to their *ſpiritual* accompliſhment yet, had a retroſpect to former *temporal* deliverances; and having been inſtituted in memory of them, bore a conſtant and unbiaſſed teſtimony to the truth of the hiſtorian. Theſe were ſtrictly enjoined under heavy penalties; and [k] at ſeveral of them all the males were obliged to leave their affairs, their homes, and families, and appear from every part of the kingdom before the Lord at *Jeruſalem*. Would a people, famous for obſtinacy and rebellion, have ſubmitted for ſo long a time as they did to the bondage of a law, the obſervance of which was attended with ſo much inconvenience, if they had not been thoroughly convinced of the reality of thoſe tranſactions which the feſtivals were appointed to commemorate?

From the time of *Moſes* downwards the hiſtory is (if poſſible) ſtill carried on with greater preciſion and accuracy through the

[k] At the three grand feſtivals, the *paſſover*, the *feaſt of the weeks*, and the *feaſt of the tabernacle*. *Deuter.* xvi. 16, &c.

ſeveral

ſeveral ſucceſſions of *judges* and *kings*, the length of their reſpective governments aſcertained, and the chronology every where ſettled till the *Babyloniſh* captivity; their deliverance from which, and re-ſettlement in *Judea*, are particularly deſcribed by *Ezra*, an eye witneſs of every circumſtance, a writer of an unimpeached character; and, though the laſt in the *Jewiſh* canon, cotemporary with *Herodotus* the father of *Grecian* hiſtory: a remarkable circumſtance, which fixes beyond all diſpute the right which the acts and monuments of the *old teſtament* have to ſuperior antiquity; and, when joined with another ſtill more remarkable circumſtance, may juſtify a conjecture that it was not without the appointment of providence, that in *hiſtorical* as well as *religious* truths all nations lighted their candle at the fire of the ſanctuary. For ſurely it was owing to ſomewhat more than chance, that certainty ſhould diſdain to dwell in other lands till it had been baniſhed from *Judea*, that all the famous epochs of other people though entirely unconnected (ſuch as the *æra of Nabonaſſar, the olympiads of Greece*,

Greece, and the *foundation of Rome*) ſhould all begin at the ſame time; and that time be the period marked out for the deſtruction of the jewiſh nation; when God was pleaſed to raiſe up two mighty empires to be his inſtruments for the puniſhment of his own people, and the overthrow of the kingdoms of *Iſrael* and *Judah*.

But to return.—We have the ſame *univerſal and uninterrupted tradition* for the authenticity of the *new teſtament*; and if the validity of this evidence is called in queſtion there is an end of public faith, human converſe muſt ſubſiſt without human confidence. We have received theſe ſacred volumes from our forefathers, they from theirs, and ſo on backwards in a continued ſeries up to thoſe who lived in the time of the *Apoſtles*, who heard them deliver the ſame doctrines, and knew for certain that they publiſhed them in thoſe writings which go under their names. They are univerſally quoted by all the fathers without intermiſſion, and by them aſſigned to thoſe authors whoſe names they now

now bear. And what other authority, than the evidence of thoſe who were cotemporary with or lived near the times of the writer, and the perpetual conſent of learned men, can we have for aſſigning particular books to particular authors? But in this the ſcriptures have a very ſingular advantage over every other compoſition whatſoever; they can alledge for their genuineneſs what no other volumes have the leaſt pretenſion to, *a judicial ſanction:* they have been approved and confirmed by men of the greateſt learning in different ages, ſolemnly aſſembled in more than a thouſand *provincial*, and not leſs than twenty *general* councils.

Add to this the confirmation which they receive from *the teſtimony of heretics*; the writings of *Moſes*, from the *Samaritans*, irreconcileable ſeparatiſts from the *Jews*, and the books of the *new teſtament* from *ſectaries* of all ages and denominations, who have always pretended the authority of ſome part of ſcripture for the doctrines which they endeavoured to propagate.

We have moreover *the ſuffrage of profeſſed enemies*. To require that the truth of *Moſes*'s hiſtory ſhould be atteſted by heathen writers of the ſame or nearly the ſame antiquity with himſelf would be abſurd; ſince we know that thoſe who affected to fix upon other nations the odious name of barbarians were in his time, and for ſeveral centuries afterwards, themſelves barbarians. [l] Yet is his authority legible in the few fragments that remain of the earlieſt writers, [m] and ſubſequent hiſtorians have fully confirmed it by the account which they give, though apparently mixed with depravation, of the hiſtory of the *Jews* and his legiſlation. With regard to the *new teſtament*; it is an undeniable fact that neither *Celſus*, *Porphyry*, nor *Julian*, nor any other who formerly wrote againſt *Chriſtianity*, ever called in queſtion the hiſtories of the facts recorded. If they had, *the public regiſters of the ſtate* would have convicted them. *That Chriſt did per-*

[l] See among others *Grotius de verit.*
[m] *Tacit. Juſtin. Diodor. Strab.*

form

form theſe miracles (ſays [n] *Juſtin Martyr* in his Apology to *Antoninus Pius*) *you may know from the records that were written under Pilate's government.* To theſe commentaries kept in the public archives *Tertullian* conſtantly and confidently appeals; which he could not have done without a certainty of being expoſed, if they had not been then extant, and the facts which he advanced therein recorded. If any one notwithſtanding ſhould think that the zealous apologiſts might quote at random, and throw the proof upon their adverſaries; let him examine *the accuſations* brought againſt the primitive Chriſtians, and their *confeſſions* before pagan tribunals; let him read carefully the account which [o] *Pliny*, appointed by *Trajan* to take cognizance of them, gives the emperor of their religious aſſemblies, their doctrines, and civil practices; he will in all of them find the ſubſtance of our holy religion, as contained in the evangelical and apoſtolical writings now extant. I ſhould be endleſs were I to proſecute this argument,

[n] P. 93. Ed. Oxon. [o] *Plin.* l. 10. Ep. 97.

and point out the different parts of the gospel narratives, which are so strongly confirmed both by pagan and jewish histories as necessarily to enforce and demonstrate the truth of the rest. So powerful is this evidence, and the force of it was so sensibly felt by *Julian*, one of the bittrest enemies Christianity ever had, that [p] he forbad its professors the use of profane literature; lest their apologists should foil pagans at their own weapons, and confute them out of their own authors; [q] *which method* (says *Lactantius*), *if learned men would take, false religions would quickly vanish.*

I shall not repeat what I have already said concerning *the excellency of the doctrines* contained in the scriptures; I barely now mention it for the sake of observing,

[p] *Amm. Marc.* xxii. 10.

[q] He finds fault with *Cyprian* for arguing with *Demetrianus* out of the scriptures which he did not believe; and observes that he ought to have produced human testimonies—those of philosophers and historians—*ut suis potissimum refutaretur auctoribus.* And then he adds—*Si hortatu nostro docti homines ac diserti huc se conferre cœperint— evanituras brevi religiones falsas et occasuram esse omnem philosophiam nemo dubitaverit. Lactant.* l. 5, c. 4.

that

that it is by no means conſonant to reaſon to ſuppoſe that ſuch ſublime and pure ideas of the nature, attributes, and worſhip of God could have been invented by a people of ſuch groſs intellectuals as the Jews are well known to have been, famous for no kind of learning, utter ſtrangers to philoſophy and ſcience, ever prone to ſuperſtition and idolatry. Their religion they could not borrow from their neighbours; for they were ſeparated from them by every diſtinguiſhing circumſtance; by language, rites, and manner of life; nay they were by their laws abſolutely forbidden having any commerce with other nations: If this had not been the caſe, yet how could they have learned the worſhip of the only true God from thoſe, who paid adoration to as many deities as there were ſtars in the firmament?

The ſame obſervation may be made with regard to thoſe by whom *Chriſtianity* was firſt preached; they were mean and illiterate, fiſhermen and publicans; and yet there is more true ſublimity and ſcience in one page of their writings than in all the volumes of all the philoſophers

put together. The precepts in the mean while and injunctions were harſh, and declared open war to all worldly pleaſures; the profeſſion was attended with great ſelf denial, perils, and ſufferings. As therefore nothing leſs than the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation could diſcover to them a religion which exceeds all human capacity, ſo nothing but the invincible power of truth could induce them to adhere to it in ſpite of public hatred and all kinds of injuries and tortures, which malice could invent and cruelty execute [r].

[r] When mention is made of their regard to truth, it would be unjuſt to forget that ingenuous honeſty with which they tranſmit to poſterity their own faults and diſgraces. Witneſs the account which they all give of the rebellions, idolatries, and apoſtacies of their own nation, the noble ſincerity with which *Moſes* records the crimes of *his progenitor Levi*, *his ſiſter's* murmurings, *his brother's* infamous yielding to the Iſraelites, and *his own* excluſion from the promiſed land. The *Evangeliſts* with the ſame candour relate at large the incredulity of *Thomas*, the ambition of *the ſons of Zebedee*, their diſputes among themſelves, and their forſaking their maſter in the hour of danger. *Matthew* makes no ſecret of his odious profeſſion; St. *Paul* frequently mentions his own furious and bloody zeal; and St. *Mark* (who is allowed to have written his goſpel under the direction of St. *Peter*) takes particular notice with the addition of ſome aggravating circumſtances of that apoſtle's denial of *Chriſt*. This ingenuity of theirs cuts off all ſuſpicion of fraud and inſincerity in all other reſpects.

The

The wonderful *harmony and connection* of all the parts of ſcripture is no mean proof of its authority and divine original. Other *hiſtorians* differ continually from each other: the errors of the firſt writers are conſtantly criticiſed and corrected by ſucceeding adventurers, and their miſtakes are ſure to meet with the ſame treatment from thoſe who come after them: nay, how often does it happen that cotemporary writers contradict each other in relating a fact, which has happened in their own time, within the ſphere of their own knowledge? But in the ſcriptures there is no diſſent or contradiction; the writers of a great part of them lived at very different times, and in diſtant places, ſo that there could be no confederacy or colluſion; and yet their relations agree with and mutually ſupport each other. Not only human *hiſtorians* but *philoſophers*, even of the ſame ſchool, diſagree about their tenets; whereas the two teſtaments like the the [5] *two Cherubs* look ſtedfaſtly towards each other,

[5] *Exod.* xxv. 20.

and towards the mercy-ſeat which they encompaſs; the holy writers, men of different education, faculties, rank, and occupations; prophets, evangeliſts, apoſtles; notwithſtanding the diverſity of time and place, the variety of matter conſiſting of myſteries of *providence* as well as myſteries of *faith*, yet all concur uniformly in carrying on one conſiſtent plan of ſupernatural doctrines, all conſtantly propoſe the ſame invariable truth flowing from the ſame fountain through different channels.

As this wonderful correſpondency cannot rationally be aſcribed to any other cauſe than their being all dictated by the ſame ſpirit of wiſdom and fore-knowledge, ſo moreover is their (I may ſay) *miraculous preſervation* a ſtrong inſtance of God's providential care, a conſtant ſanction and confirmation of the truth contained in them, continued by him without intermiſſion in all ages of the church. Whence comes it that whilſt the hiſtories of *mighty empires* are loſt in the waſte of time, the very names of their founders, conquerors, and legiſlators, conſigned with their bodies to the

the ſilence and oblivion of the grave: Whence comes it that the [t] hiſtory of a *mean inſignificant people* and the ſettlement of God's church ſhould from its very beginning, which is coeval with the world itſelf, to this day remain full and compleat? Whence comes it that nothing is left of innumerable volumes of philoſophy and polite literature, in the preſervation of which the admiration and care of all mankind ſeemed to conſpire; and that the ſcriptures have in ſpite of all oppoſition come down to our time entire and genuine? During the captivity the *urim* and *thummim*, the ark itſelf, and every glory of the jewiſh worſhip was loſt; [u] during the profanation of *Antiochus*, whoſoever was found with the book of the law was put to death, and every book that could be found burned with fire: [w] the ſame

[t] There is a chaſm in the Jewiſh hiſtory of near 250 years, viz. between the death of *Nehemiah* and the time of the *Maccabees*; but *Judea* being during that period a province of *Syria* and under the prefecture of it, the hiſtory of the Jews is of courſe involved in that of the country to which they were ſubject.—This was the caſe during the captivity.

[u] 1 *Macc.* i. 56, 57.

[w] Particularly in that dreadful perſecution under the emperor *Diocletian* about the year 303.—See *Euſeb.* l. 7.

impious

impious artifice was put in practice by ſeveral roman emperors during their perſecutions of the Chriſtians, yet have the ſacred volumes ſurvived and triumphed over theſe and numberleſs other calamities. I need not mention that more than egyptian darkneſs which overwhelmed religion for ſeveral centuries; during which any falſification was ſecure, eſpecially in the old teſtament, the hebrew language being entirely unknown to all but the Jews: and yet they have, in ſpite of their prejudices, preſerved with ſcrupulous care even thoſe paſſages which confirm moſt the chriſtian religion; the providence of God having been graciouſly pleaſed to make their blindneſs a ſtanding evidence of the truth of the ſcriptures, their obſtinacy an inſtrument to maintain and promote his doctrine and his kingdom. I need not remind you of the preſent low ſtate of many churches, and the total annihilation of others, whereof nothing now remains but the name and the ſcriptures tranſlated for their uſe—happy in this reſpect, that their particular misfortune is of ſervice to the general cauſe; inſomuch that

that ſo many copies in ſo many different languages, preſerved under ſo many untoward circumſtances, and differing from each other in no eſſential point, are a wonderful proof of their authenticity, authority, divinity.

In theſe proofs, though drawn from human reaſoning, clear evidences appear of divine interpoſition, and conſequently of the truth of thoſe writings "which "are the great charter of Chriſtians, "upon the validity of which their faith "and their hope are built." But Chriſtianity reſts not entirely upon human reaſoning: God has given leſs equivocal atteſtations of its divine original; that the firſt preachers and propagators of it received their commiſſion from him is manifeſt by the *miracles* they were enabled to perform; and that their writings were dictated by his eternal ſpirit, the many *prophecies* they contain, and their punctual accompliſhment, abundantly demonſtrate.

To anſwer all the objections made to *miracles* by the adverſaries of our religion would

would lead me into too wide a field, and an attempt of that kind is rendered unneceſſary by the ſucceſsful labours of many pious apologiſts, who have beyond all exception ſhewn the poſſibility of them, their neceſſity, and ſufficiency towards the proofs of a divine miſſion. I ſhall only obſerve that the firſt enemies of the goſpel, *Celſus*, *Hierocles*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian*, had a very different opinion from what our modern infidels entertain of teſtifications of this kind; and therefore, though they could not deny the reality, they endeavoured to derogate from the greatneſs, of our Saviour's miracles; leſt, if they ſhould allow them in their full extent, they ſhould be forced to acknowledge the work ſupernatural, the worker omnipotent. Having thus leſſened and reduced them, they oppoſed to them miracles ſaid to have been performed by *Apuleius*, *Apollonius*, *Ariſteas*, and others whoſe names were forgotten almoſt as ſoon as mentioned; they attributed them to *art magic*, which [x] they ſaid our Savi-

[x] They had read or heard that *Chriſt* had been removed into *Egypt* to avoid *Herod*'s fury; but they choſe to give another

our learned in *Egypt*—when he was two years old; [y] to the *invocations of demons and evil ſpirits*—whoſe power and operations he came to deſtroy; [z] to the *names of powerful angels* ſtolen from the ſhrines of *Egypt*—a conceit in all probability borrowed from the *Jews*, [a] who aſſerted that his miracles were owing to the *unutterable name of God*, the *Shem Hamephoraſh* which he had ſtolen out of the temple. " [b] See " here the force of prejudice, the vanity " of reaſon, the ſtrange perverſeneſs of " the human mind: the heathen philo- " ſophers believed magic, the *Jews* had " faith in amulets, and yet both of them " diſbelieved Chriſtianity!"

Theſe idle pretences are ſolidly confuted by ſeveral of the fathers; who [c] among

another reaſon for this removal, and aſſerted that " he had " been brought up there ſecretly, and having thoroughly " learned *magic* returned into *Judæa* and ſet himſelf up for a " God." *Celſus* apud *Orig.* l. 1. p. 10.

[y] *Ibid.* p. 7.

[z] *Magus* fuit: clandeſtinis artibus omnia illa perfecit: *Ægyptiorum ex adytis Angelorum potentia nomina* et remotas *furatus eſt* diſciplinas. *Arnob. adv. g.* l. 1.

[a] *Raym. pug. fid.* p. 290.

[b] *Weſt on the reſurrection.*

[c] "Ὅπως δὲ μή τις ἀντιλήσθεις ἡμῖν, τί καλύει ἢ τὸν παρ' ἡμῖν λεγόμενον

other arguments, make, even upon this occaſion, uſe of that of *prophecy*. This was one of the characters by which the Jews were to know the *Meſſiah*; he was to come furniſhed with ſuch ſpecial teſtimonials and powers from God. When *John* ſent his diſciples to enquire of *Chriſt*—[d]*art thou the* ὁ ἐρχομένος, *he that ſhould come, or is it another perſon that we are in expectation of? he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Go and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee; the blind receive their ſight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up and the poor have the goſpel preached to them.* This was one of the prophetical marks of the *Meſſiah*; he was not only to perform miracles in general, but [e] theſe very miracles in particular which are here

μενον Χριστὸν, ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ὄντα, μαγικῇ τεχνῇ ἃς λέγομεν δυνάμεις πεποιηκέναι, εν δόξαι παρὰ τῦτο υἱὸν Θεῦ εἶναι, τὴν ἀπόδειξιν ἤδη ποιησόμεθα, ἀ τοῖς λέγεσι πιστεύοντες, ἀλλὰ "τοῖς προφητεύσεσι πρὶν ἢ γενέσθαι κατ' ἀνάγκην πειθόμενοι." — *Juſtin Mart. Apolog.* 1. p. 60.

[d] *Matth.* ii. 2, 3, 4, 5.

[e] *Iſaiah* xxxv. 5. Our Saviour (ſays the pious and learned Mr. *Lowth* upon this place) proved himſelf to be the *Meſſias* to *John*'s diſciples by appealing to this *prophecy*, as literally fulfilled in the *miracles* which he wrought.

ſpecified

ſpecified by our Saviour. And in truth, though miracles muſt of themſelves be acknowledged by the ingenuous and unbiaſſed to be a poſitive and direct proof of a divine miſſion; yet when conſidered moreover as credentials, by which it was repeatedly declared that miſſion ſhould be atteſted, they acquire a freſh degree of efficacy and credit; being a ſolemn ratification of the evidence of God, whoſe faithfulneſs was bound to accompliſh what his knowledge had foretold.

The teſtimony of miracles viewed in this light is comprehended in that of prophecy: they prove the bleſſed *Jeſus* not only to have been a prophet ſent from God, but that very prophet [f] *to whom all the prophets give witneſs*. And here it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that this ſolid and inſuperable argument is entirely peculiar to *Chriſtianity*; neither *Moſes* himſelf nor the *law* which he eſtabliſhed were predicted; both were made ſubſervient to, typical and prophetical of, their

[f] *Acts* x. 43.

perfection

perfection and ſubſtance, the *Meſſiah* and his kingdom; for him was this plenitude of proof reſerved, the univerſal atteſtation of every age ſince the foundation of the world: to all of them was *Chriſt* promiſed, that no generation might be without foundation for religious hope, thoſe that preceded his coming be prepared to receive him, the then preſent confidently acknowledge, the future faithfully believe. [g] *Known to God are all his works from the beginning*; he alone has them all, paſt, preſent, and future, in one full and entire image before him: to foreſee, foretel, and at the appointed time produce contingencies into actual exiſtence is peculiar to him who, with a perfect and compleat knowledge, has the ſole and abſolute diſpoſal of all events. On this ground God challenges idolaters and the objects of their worſhip. [h] *Shew the things that are to come hereafter that we may know that ye are Gods.* Numberleſs are the inſtances of this kind in which the inſpired writers bear witneſs to themſelves; they diſcover

[g] *Acts* xv. 18. [h] *Iſ.* xli. 23.

not

not only the origin but the fate of all nations, even of their own. God made the greateſt monarchies inſtruments not only to evince his juſtice, in the deſtruction of *Iſrael* and captivity of *Judah*, but likewiſe the impartiality of the hiſtorians who relate thoſe events, and the truth of the prophets who foretold them. The rejection of the *Meſſiah* by the Jews, their rejection by God, are predicted by all their prophets at a time when they were, and expected ever to be, his peculiar people; and the admiſſion of the Gentiles into the covenant upon their excluſion is delivered from [i] *Moſes* the firſt down to [k] *Malachi* the laſt of the prophets: theſe circumſtances are conſtantly united in the prediction, and were actually ſo in the accompliſhment, with the advent of *Chriſt:* the time of whoſe appearance upon earth was ſo ſtrongly marked that we are aſſured not only by the Evangeliſts, but by both Pagan and Jewiſh hiſtorians, that the whole nation was about that time big with the expectation of him [l] *who ſhould redeem Iſrael.*

[i] *Deuter.* xxxii. 21. [k] *Malac.* i. 11.
[l] *Luke* xxiv. 21.

This made them rebel againſt the Romans; this made them (as is obſerved by [m] one of their own nation) ready to follow every impoſtor, who took advantage of the times to abuſe their hopes and ſerve his own ambitious deſigns.

That the heathen world were not ſtrangers to this expectation, by whatever means it was raiſed in them, whether by tradition, the books of the Sibylls, their intercourſe with the Jews in conſequence of their diſperſion, or laſtly by the Greek verſion of the ſacred oracles—by whatever means this expectation was raiſed, that it was entertained by the Gentile world is too plain to be called in queſtion. To what other cauſe can we attribute the appearance of ſo many candidates at that time, and at no other, for ſovereignty, and the ready ſubmiſſion of the Romans who yet held the very name of king in deteſtation? [n] No leſs than *ſeventeen* prodigies are mentioned, by which *Auguſtus* was thought to be the perſon pointed at by

[m] *Joſ. hiſt.* 6. 5. *Suet. Veſp.* 4. [n] *Sueton.* in *Aug.* 94.

the

the oracles for univerſal monarchy; and one in particular, a few months before his birth, at which the ſenate was ſo much alarmed as to decree that all the children born within that year ſhould be deſtroyed. [o] The ſame was predicted of *Tiberius* in his infancy by *Scribonius* an aſtrologer, with this remarkable addition "that he "was to reign without the enſigns of "royalty," *regnaturum quandoque ſed ſine regio inſigni*; a circumſtance ſo exactly correſponding with *Chriſt*'s lowly eſtate mentioned by the prophets, as to leave no doubt of the diviner's having ſtolen from them this idea of that extraordinary perſonage then univerſally looked for, who was indeed a king, but whoſe [p] *kingdom was not of this world.* [q] According to the opinion then prevailing (for which the old writings of the prieſts and an antient tradition was quoted) this univerſal king was to come from *Judea.* Hence thoſe extraordinary favours, of which *Philo* boaſts ſo much, ſhewn to the Jewiſh nation by all the emperors; hence the jealouſy which

[o] *Suet. Tib.* 14. [p] *John* xviii. 36.
[q] *Tacit. hiſt.* l. 1. c. 13. *Suet. Veſp.* 1.

Veſpaſian conceived againſt his ſon *Titus* after his conqueſt of *Judea*, leſt he ſhould revolt from him and make himſelf emperor of the eaſt; [r] hence he murthered all that could be found of the lineage of *David*, that he might be ſure of having no competitor in the eaſt; and [s] hence perhaps (for I would not be thought to lay too much ſtreſs upon preſumptions of this kind) *Titus* himſelf, when the title ſeemed by theſe means to be rendered ſecure, had the appellation given him of *deliciæ humani generis* in alluſion to the [t] *deſire of all nations*, by which name the king pointed at in the oriental prophecy was characteriſed.

Thus much for the general expectation of the *Gentile* world about the time of our Saviour's appearance in the fleſh. As for the *Jews*, the period for his coming was ſo clearly and preciſely determined by

[r] *Euſeb. hiſt. eccleſ.* l. 3. c. 12.

[s] There are coins ſtruck in honour of *Auguſtus* and *Galba* with this inſcription, *Salus generis humani*. *Vindex* preſſed *Galba* to aſſume the purple in theſe terms, *ut humano generi aſſertorem ducemque ſe accommodaret*.

[t] *Hag.* ii. 7.

their

their prophets, that it was impoſſible for them to miſtake it. Accordingly we find them, from that time to the final deſtruction of their city and government, looking for him with the utmoſt eagerneſs and impatience; and, when that dreadful cataſtrophe had entirely cut off all their hopes, the pitiful evaſions they made uſe of (ſome pretending that their ſins had prevented his coming at the appointed time, others that he really did come but concealed himſelf) are a full demonſtration againſt themſelves, that in *Jeſus Chriſt* all the characters of time, as well as others, were really and truly compleated. Of this truth the modern Rabbis are ſo ſenſible, that they [u] forbid under the penalty of a curſe the people to examine the chronological prophecies, and compute from them the coming of the *Meſſiah*; which appeared ſo clearly fixed to [w] Rabbi *Nehemias*, who lived fifty years before *Chriſt*, that he declared the *Meſſiah* could not be deferred beyond thoſe fifty years.

[u] *Cocceius quæſt. et reſp. jud. conſid.* p. 332.
[w] *Grot. de verit.* l. 5. c. 14.

The *Prophecies* indeed, thoſe of *Daniel* particularly, are ſo very explicit and were ſo exactly fulfilled that [x] *Porphyry*, a learned Pagan of the third century, endeavoured in his writings againſt Chriſtianity to prove that they were not *prophetical* predictions of things future, but *hiſtorical* narratives of events already paſt, and publiſhed under the name of *Daniel* ſome ages after the death of that prophet. But this method of invalidating prophecies is, as [y] St. *Jerom* rightly obſerves, the greateſt evidence for the truth of them, [z] being entirely and confeſſedly founded upon the exactneſs of their accompliſhment. That they were not forged need no other proof than that they were and ſtill are kept and acknowledged by the Jews; and therefore [a] St. *Auſtin* imputes

[x] *Hieron. in proœm. ad comment. in Daniel.*

[y] Cujus impugnatio teſtimonium veritatis eſt. *Hieron. ibid.*

[z] As God obliged Balaam (ſays *Theodoret*) to *bleſs* his people whom he was come to *curſe*, ſo he turned the tongue of *Porphyry* againſt himſelf and employed him as an inſtrument to deſtroy the falſhood which he laboured to eſtabliſh. *Theodor. de curand. Græcor. affect.* l. 3.

[a] *Auguſt. Ep.* 59.

their

their preſervation and diſperſion to God's peculiar providence making good that prophetical prayer of the *Pſalmiſt*, [b] *ſlay them not leſt my people forget it; but ſcatter them abroad among the people*; that thus they might carry among all nations clear and unſuſpected demonſtrations, that *Jeſus* whom they rejected was truly the *Meſſiah* who [c] *Moſes and the prophets did ſay ſhould come*.

To this teſtimony born to Chriſtianity by the predictions of the *old teſtament* we muſt not forget, though ſtreightened by the time uſually allotted to diſcourſes of this kind, to add thoſe of our *Saviour* himſelf, which were afterwards punctually verified by the event. He foretold every minute circumſtance of his own ſufferings, thoſe of his diſciples; his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion; the aſſiſtances which he would grant his Apoſtles by the miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, the perſecutions, the hereſies, and apoſtacies of his followers, and in ſpite of all theſe ob-

[b] *Pſ.* lix. 11. [c] *Acts* xxvi. 22.

ſtacles the ſpeedy and wonderful propagation of the goſpel; [d] *this goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world for a witneſs to all nations, and then ſhall the end come,* the end or deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the whole Jewiſh nation; which, as he told them at a time when it was very unlikely to happen, did however happen [e] *before that generation paſſed.* The diſmal calamities attending it are diſtinctly and particularly enumerated; [f] the fortification by which *Titus* encompaſſed the city in ſuch a manner that none could come out of it; the famine conſequent thereupon; the total demolition of the temple and city; the amazing ſlaughter of the inhabitants; the captivity and diſperſion of thoſe that ſurvived, circumſtances all expreſsly mentioned in our *Saviour*'s prophecy of thoſe days of vengeance, diſtreſs, and wrath, ſtand as expreſsly recorded in the writings of an hiſtorian of their own of undoubted credit and authority.

[d] *Matt.* xxiv. 14. [e] *Luke* xxi. 32.

[f] Compare the 24th chapter of St. *Matthew*, the latter part of the 19th and the 21ſt of St. *Luke* with *Joſephus*, l. 6, 7.

Upon

Upon the whole then—Religion being (as the logicians ſpeak) the *copula relationis* between God and man muſt of courſe be as antient as that relation. No other writings whatever beſides the holy ſcriptures attempt any account of the *primitive religion* of the world. In them we have through the ſpecial providence of God *miraculouſly preſerved* the ſeveral declarations of his will which he was pleaſed to make to our forefathers from the beginning; *every diſpenſation, however different in appearance, is found to be in truth and ſubſtance the ſame*; all through a variety of circumſtances are by a wonderful concatenation made ſubſervient to the ſame end, center and terminate in him who was prefigured by their rites and ceremonies, of whom all the patriarchs were types, all the prieſts and prophets repreſentations. The truth of the facts recorded is proved beyond the poſſibility of a doubt by ſeveral internal marks, and externally *by the length of time* in which their authenticity has been allowed, by a *conſtant uninterrupted tradition* confirmed by *the acknowledgement of our adverſaries*

adverſaries themſelves. The *doctrines* by their *excellency* bear ample teſtimony to themſelves. They have moreover received the ſanction of *a direct and ſolemn atteſtation from heaven* "by the mediation of "ſigns and works ſupernatural beyond the "power of any creature to effect or coun-"terfeit." Theſe works were confeſſedly performed by the bleſſed *Jeſus*, and in his name and by his appointment by thoſe alſo whom he commiſſioned to carry on the great ſcheme of ſalvation begun by himſelf. The divinity of theſe miracles themſelves are in a peculiar manner confirmed by their *having been foretold:* in him whom we acknowledge this together with all the other *prophetical marks and characters* by which the *Meſſiah* was to be known exactly concur. He was to be [g] *born at Bethlehem*, [h] *of the tribe of Judah, of the* [i] *royal houſe of David*; circumſtances aſcertained by the providence of God,

[g] *Micah* v. 2. *Matth.* ii. 7.

[h] This is clearly ſignified by the patriarch *Jacob. Geneſ.* xlix. 7. *Heb.* vii. 14.

[i] *Iſa.* xi. 1, 10. *Jer.* xxiii. 5, &c.—Hence our Saviour is in the *Revelations*, v. 5. called *the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David.*

who

who made the enrolment of the empire by a pagan ſubſervient to the fulfilling and notoriety of his prophecies. He was to be [k] *born of a virgin*, and though of royal lineage yet of [l] *a poor family, of external meanneſs and obſcurity*; [m] the latter of theſe circumſtances his adverſaries always urged againſt him; the former his evangeliſts and all other diſciples, perſons of unimpeached integrity, conſtantly avowed; and had the truth thereof not been notorious, the inquiſitive malice of the Scribes and Phariſees would ſoon have detected and gladly publiſhed the falſhood. [n] He was to come, according to the patriarch *Jacob*, while the tribe of *Judah* and thoſe who adhered to it remained one body politic governed by their own laws; according to the prophets [o] *Haggai* and [p] *Malachi* while the ſecond temple ſtood; according to the prediction of [q] *Daniel* ſhortly before the

[k] *Iſa.* vii. 14. *Matth.* i. 23.

[l] *Iſa.* xlix. 7. liii. 3.

[m] *Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of Mary, the brother of James, &c.?—And they were offended at him. Mark* vi. 3.—*Matth.* xiii. 55, &c.

[n] *Geneſ.* xlix. 8.

[o] *Hagg.* ii. 6, 7, 8.

[p] *Mal.* iii. 1.

[q] *Dan.* ix. 24, 26.

deſtruction

deſtruction of the city and ſanctuary, within a determined period of time, which, however computed, falls within the compaſs of the age wherein he lived and the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. To prepare the Jews for this period God had been pleaſed to wean them by degrees from the law of *Moſes:* he built them indeed a temple after the captivity; but withdrew the ark of his preſence and the *urim* and *thummim* from among them, and accepted of offerings made by ſtrange fire; thus abrogating one ceremony after the other as the time approached wherein *Chriſt* was to cancel all the ordinances. When he appeared upon earth he confirmed what the prophet had foretold concerning the abomination of deſolation, the demolition of this ſecond temple, their woeful tragedy, captivity and diſperſion. It accordingly came to paſs, and then their peculiarity viſibly ceaſed; their polity both civil and eccleſiaſtical was totally deſtroyed; and they have ever ſince remained miſerable exiles, without the diſtinction of tribes or genealogies, [r] *without prince,*

[r] *Song of the three children*, v. 14.

prophet

prophet or leader, without burnt-offering, ſacrifice, oblation, incenſe, or place to ſacrifice before God. That polity, during the continuance of which *Shiloh* was to come, is now diſſolved; the temple, which *the deſire of all nations* was to fill with his glory, is laid even with the ground; the period, in which the *Meſſiah* was to make an atonement for ſin, is expired; and the whole nation of the Jews a ſtanding monument of the [s] deſolation which was to come at the end thereof. If therefore the *Meſſiah* foretold by the prophets be not already come, he can never come; the place, the time, and all other circumſtances aſſigned to him, are now no more. But the *Meſſiah* foretold by the prophets is come, and therefore is [t] *the viſion and prophecy ſealed up*; all the predictions of foregoing ages concerning him are accompliſhed, and therefore neither the place, nor the time, nor any other circumſtance aſſigned to him is or can be any more. [u] *Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the*

[s] *Dan.* ix. 26. [t] *Dan.* ix. 24. [u] *Heb.* iii. 1.

heavenly

heavenly calling let us not [w] *rebel againſt the light,* [x] *let us take heed leſt there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief*; for [y] *how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and has been confirmed unto us by them that heard him*; *God alſo bearing them witneſs both with ſigns and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt?*

[w] *Job* xxiv. 13. [x] *Heb.* iii. 12. [y] *Heb.* ii. 3, 4.

SERMON III.

ISAIAH lxi. 1, 2.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

[a] THERE have not been wanting men of piety and abilities who have endeavoured to overthrow the *evangelical*

[a] See Mr. *Lowth's* excellent preface to his learned Commentaries on the prophets.

sense

ſenſe of the prophecies of the old teſtament, confining them merely to what is improperly called their primary meaning, and appropriating them wholly to the perſons of whom or to whom they were proximately ſpoken, and their accompliſhment to or near the times in which they were delivered.

It may indeed be doubted whether the prophets themſelves fully underſtood the chief and ultimate deſign of [b] *what they ſpake when they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*; but it is matter of aſtoniſhment that any intelligent and unprejudiced reader of the ſcriptures can call into queſtion the typical meaning of the prophecies, which thoſe authentic records aſſure him were fulfilled in the promiſed *Meſſiah*.

[c] The ſpace of time from *Iſaiah* to *Malachi* was ſurely too narrow a boundary

[b] 2 *Pet.* ii. 21.

[c] *Iſaiah*'s firſt viſion was in the year that king *Uzziah* died. c. vi. 1. *Malachi* was cotemporary, if not the ſame, with *Ezra*: the ſpace between them can therefore but very little, if at all, exceed three hundred years.

to

to confine the plenitude of divine revelation; the captivity of the Jews and their return from thence, though under the direction of Providence, were certainly of themſelves events too inconſiderable to merit all the pomp and ſolemnity with which the viſions are introduced and the actors in that glorious ſcene, even Cherubim and Seraphim and the God of *Iſrael* himſelf. Such ſpecial interpoſitions could not have temporary occurrences only for their objects, but through them extended their view to [d] *what ſhould come to paſs at the laſt, and ſhewed what ſhould come to paſs for ever.* The exultation and triumph of the prophetical promiſes were particularly deſigned to raiſe in the minds of the Jews an expectation of far greater bleſſings than their deliverance from the *Babyloniſh* captivity, and return to *Judea.* Theſe were only preludes to their deliverance from the dominion of ſin, and title to the *heavenly Canaan*; bleſſings, which ſuch among them as believed have obtained, and we through the tender mercy of our God this

[d] *Eccluſ.* xlviii. 24, 25.

day enjoy. And accordingly we read throughout the inſpired writings that the Apoſtles looked upon [e] *the teſtimony of Jeſus* to be *the ſpirit of prophecy*; always confirming, when they diſputed with the Jews, the doctrines of the *new* by the writings of the *old teſtament*. But we have ſtill greater authority than theirs, even that of our bleſſed Saviour; who in his expoſition of the prophecy, which I have choſen for my text, has applied it to himſelf ſaying after he had read it—[f] *This day is fulfilled* ἡ γραφὴ αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ὑμῶν *this very ſcripture which you have juſt now heard.*

The prophet *Iſaiah* from whom the words are taken, having in the foregoing chapters deſcribed under ſeveral *ſymbols* and *allegories* the fate of the church from the beginning to the end of time, at laſt introduces the *Meſſiah* manifeſting himſelf to the Jewiſh nation, and explaining his own office together with the benefits and privileges of the oeconomy of grace in *familiar phraſes* by an eaſy alluſion to a

[e] *Revel.* xix. 10. [f] *Luke* iv. 21.

ſolemn

ſolemn feſtival, deſigned to put them in mind of a *temporal* and prefigure a *ſpiritual* deliverance. This was the [g] *Jubilee* celebrated with the greateſt tokens of joy by God's own expreſs appointment; every particular circumſtance of which was analogous to ſome part of the goſpel diſpenſation, and the whole a lively adumbration of the [h] *mercy promiſed to our forefathers through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus.*

God in the beginning created man upright, and beſtowed upon him many ſingular marks of eſpecial regard and favour, dignifying him with the prerogative of dominion over the reſt of the creation, and placing him in a delightful garden which he honoured with his own immediate preſence, condeſcending to have frequent intercourſe with man. The tree of life was planted in the midſt; the fruit of which was appointed by a *natural* or *ſacramental* virtue to preſerve and prolong his life in this ſtate of bliſs and glory.

[g] *Levit.* xxv. [h] *Luke* i. 72. *Rom.* iii. 24.

But he was disobedient to the divine command, and eat of the only fruit which God had forbidden him, having expressly said, [i] *in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* [k] In the penalty of death annexed to disobedience was virtually implied the promise of life upon obedience; but the conditions of the covenant being broken, all title to the reward was forfeited; the punishment denounced must be inflicted, or the honour of the law and the authority of the lawgiver trampled upon. The covenant had been by the goodness of God accommodated in every respect to the nature of man; his reason and understanding, his appetites and passions, were interested in his obedience: *the injunction of a positive command* was founded on that duty, which reason could not but tell him he owed to his Creator and benefactor; the *promise* had an especial regard to the desire of happiness interwoven in his very frame; and the *threatning* to the

[i] *Gen.* ii. 17.

[k] This is proved at large by our excellent bishop *Bull* in his learned *discourse concerning the first covenant and the state of man before the fall.*

prevailing

prevailing affection of fear, which ſtarts at every object deſtructive of his being. If after ſo ſignal and ungrateful an abuſe of God's kindneſs man had gone totally unpuniſhed, what idea could he have formed to himſelf of God's veracity, purity, and abhorrence of iniquity? Would not an abſolute and unconditional pardon of this firſt, and therefore moſt heinous ſin as being the cauſe and origin of all ſubſequent ones—would it not have occaſioned ſecurity under guilt, and made man ſay in his heart, [1] *Tuſh the Lord does not ſee, neither does God regard it?* Would it not have deſtroyed the neceſſity of religion and holineſs, and fruſtrated the ſolemnity of divine laws and divine commands? for if pardon is arbitrary, puniſhment muſt likewiſe be arbitrary; and every thing of courſe reſolved into the deſpotic power of God, which neceſſarily ſuperſedes if not totally annihilates his truth, juſtice, mercy, and other eſſential attributes. Man was amply provided for a continuance in his original rectitude,

[1] *Pſ.* xciv. 7.

furniſhed with powers ſufficient to perform the moſt ſpiritual obedience; he could therefore plead no excuſe, neither could God conſiſtently with his righteouſneſs and veracity diſpenſe with ſo direct a violation of his poſitive command, but was obliged to vindicate the ſacredneſs of his laws by putting into execution the puniſhment denounced againſt the tranſgreſſion.

To apprehend rightly the nature, and conſequently form a true judgement, of this puniſhment we muſt conſider it in *three* diſtinct points of view; for the death denounced in the ſentence is *threefold*.—Firſt, *A ſpiritual death*, a deprivation of that purity and holineſs derived from the divine image imprinted on the ſoul of man.—Secondly, *A temporal death*, a ſubjection to the miſeries of a corrupt and depraved nature, to labour and pain, infirmities and diſeaſes, and at laſt a ſeparation of the ſoul from the body.—Thirdly, *An eternal death*, a future ſtate of endleſs miſery in the ſeparation of the ſoul from God. All theſe kinds of death were included

cluded in the penalty annexed to the violation of the covenant of works. But [m] *God had* not *forgotten to be gracious*; [n] *in the midſt of wrath he remembered mercy:* of the *three* parts of which the puniſhment conſiſted the *firſt* only was immediately felt. And this perhaps may not ſo properly be ſaid to have been a puniſhment inflicted as the natural effect of a natural cauſe, not ſo much a *judicial* as a *neceſſary* conſequence of man's diſobedience. There is no [o] *communion between light and darkneſs*, neither could holineſs dwell in what was ſinful and corrupt. Man having once parted with his innocence, his thoughts, deſires, and affections, his whole frame and conſtitution, become diſordered and vitiated; and this degeneracy and depravity was, by the natural law of propagation, unavoidably tranſmitted by him to his unhappy poſterity. This I apprehend to be the true meaning of what is called *original ſin*, the abſence of original righteouſneſs; that darkneſs in the underſtanding

[m] *Pſ.* lxxvii. 9. [n] *Habak.* iii. 2.
[o] 2 *Cor.* vi. 14.

and obliquity in the will, which ſucceeded that original light and rectitude by which *Adam*, if he had continued in his obedience, would have been enabled to have led *a ſpiritual life* here on earth; but, having ſuffered himſelf to be deſpoiled of them by the wiles of the tempter, both he and thoſe, who with their being derived the infection from him, became *ſpiritually dead*, [p] *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.*

This ſad effect of their diſobedience our firſt parents, I ſay, immediately and very ſeverely felt: [q] *they knew that they were naked*; they perceived the foul degradation of their nature and [r] *hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God.* Conſciouſneſs of their guilt brought upon them the dread of God's juſt anger and reſentment, and anticipated all the horrors and torments of puniſhment even before ſentence was pronounced.

The other parts of the penalty though God did not, could not, abſolutely diſ-

[p] *Epheſ.* ii. 1. [q] *Geneſ.* iii. 7.
[r] *Geneſ.* iii. 8.

penſe

penſe with; yet he did not directly or rigorouſly exact them; he granted the offenders a long reprieve from *temporal* death, and even before he paſſed ſentence conveyed to them by the promiſe of a redeemer the comfortable hopes of their being totally delivered from *eternal* death, and recovering the title to life which they had forfeited by their diſobedience. That *Adam* underſtood the promiſe in this ſenſe is, I think, plain from his changing the name of his wife, and henceforth calling her *Eve*; clearly alluding to the promiſed [s] *ſeed of the woman* by whom all mankind (now under ſentence of death) were to be reſtored to life. And that *Eve*'s hopes likewiſe were erect is evident from her fond and ſanguine expectation of this great deliverer in her firſt-born. [t] *I have gotten*, ſays ſhe, *a man from the Lord*; or as [u] ſome learned men (who think that in the original the particle את denotes, as it

[s] *Geneſ.* iii. 20. [t] *Geneſ.* iv. 1.

[u] Among others *Iſidorus Clarius*, who adds, *Nam et cabaliſtica traditio meminit promiſſionis de Meſſiah primis parentibus factæ.* See *Berriman*'s fourth ſermon at Boyle's lectures and the authorities he quotes.

often

often does, the accuſative caſe) render the words by appoſition, *I have gotten the Man-God.*

Together with moral, phyſical evil alſo was introduced into the world; whether by a natural connexion between them ariſing from the original conſtitution of things, or by a ſpecial interpoſition of providence at this period, lies within the boſom of the Almighty; but that the earth did actually ſympathize with man, and that the promiſe of deliverance from corruption was expected to extend to the material world, the prophecy of *Lamech* at the birth of *Noah*, the typical reſtorer of mankind, is a direct and poſitive proof. He gave him the name of *Noah* which ſignifies *comfort*, ſaying, [*] *this ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, becauſe of the ground which the Lord hath curſed.* God whoſe every diſpenſation is founded on mercy, and has always a reſpect to that amazing inſtance of it the redemption of man through

[*] *Geneſ.* v. 29.

Chriſt,

Chriſt, was pleaſed to keep this aſſurance alive by various methods, by promiſes declaratory and emblematical; never leaving his fallen creatures without hope, nor his gracious intentions without witneſs. * That he continued to favour them with ſeveral, if not manifeſtations of his preſence, at leaſt revelations of his will, has been concluded from ſome hints given by *Moſes* in his ſhort hiſtory of mankind before the flood. Of this point the prophecy of *Lamech* juſt mentioned ſeems to me clearly deciſive. It is however worthy of obſervation that he makes mention only of the curſe, which the Lord had pronounced and inflicted on the ground; whereas *Adam*'s prophetical impoſition of the name of *Eve* upon his wife has plainly a reſpect only to the reſtoration of mankind to life by the promiſed ſeed. It ſeems therefore not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that there had been a ſubſequent revelation, in which God made known his gracious purpoſe of relieving man's temporal miſery, by an abatement of that ſterility, malignity, and

* See *Shuckford*'s *connection*, l. 1.

general

general depravation which had on the fall infected the whole inanimate creation. *Adam* poſſibly might not feel this part of the curſe in its full rigour: that it was encreaſed upon the murder of *Abel* is more than probable; for *the* [y] *Lord ſaid unto Cain, When thou tilleſt the ground it ſhall not* henceforth *yield unto thee her ſtrength*; which words ſurely imply that it had hitherto in ſome degree yielded her ſtrength, in a degree ſuperior to that in which it ſhould do it for the future. As men increaſed in wickedneſs we may, from the analogy eſtabliſhed between moral and phyſical evil, venture to ſuppoſe that the curſe increaſed in proportion, till at laſt impiety having attained its utmoſt height it was fully compleated by the total deſtruction of the earth.

When *Noah* took poſſeſſion of the new world his father's prophecy began to take place.—[z] *The Lord ſaid in his heart, I will*

[y] *Geneſ.* iv. 12. For this obſervation and others adopted in this diſcourſe I am indebted to Dr. *Worthington's Eſſay on Redemption.*

[z] *Geneſ.* viii. 21.

not

not again curſe the ground any more for man's ſake.—While the earth remaineth, ſeed time and harveſt, and cold and heat, and ſummer and winter, and day and night, ſhall not ceaſe. Plainly intimating that [a] the temperature of the air and the variety of ſeaſons, which by their irregularity were inſtruments of correction in the antediluvian world, ſhould for the future by their regularity and conſtant ſucceſſion be inſtruments of mercy, and the means of removing that curſe of which the flood had been the effect and conſequence.

Noah being typical of our Saviour, and the deluge of baptiſm, the bleſſings contained in the covenant made with him in conſequence of the flood, are likewiſe typical of the bleſſings promiſed by the evangelical covenant in conſequence of our ſpiritual regeneration by the waters of baptiſm. But the type is always inferior to the antitype; the bleſſings covenanted

a See Biſhop *Sherlock*'s *fourth diſcourſe on prophecy*, and his *ſecond diſſertation* annexed to the diſcourſes.

with

with *Noah* were merely temporal, and even that in a lower degree; by them indeed the ſeverity of the curſe was greatly ſoftened, but by no means totally removed: yet did this relief adminiſter great comfort upon his entrance into the new world; it was a pledge of and a prelude to the reſtitution of nature to its original ſtate, in the ſame manner as *Enoch* was to his forefathers an earneſt of their deliverance from that far greater penalty of the curſe, ſubjection unto death.

Thus did God by different revelations at different periods preſerve man from deſpair, and provide for his preſent comfort by giving him frequent aſſurances that he ſhould in time be raiſed from that deplorable degradation into which he was ſunk, and reſtored to his primitive righteouſneſs and of courſe to his primitive happineſs. For there is, as we have before obſerved, a correſpondence between moral and phyſical evil; the world, having been made for man, felt together with man the effects of God's diſpleaſure; it fell,

fell, and by conſequential reaſoning will riſe with man; it has been made an inſtrument of miſery to ſin, and will by the bleſſing of God be made an inſtrument of felicity to righteouſneſs; when according to the eſtabliſhed rules of its ſubſerviency to moral cauſes it ſhall hereafter together with man recover its former excellence and perfection: [b] *Thou ſhalt judge the folk righteouſly and govern the nations upon earth: then ſhall the earth bring forth her increaſe, and God even our own God ſhall give us his bleſſing.*

The removal of the curſe is with great probability ſuppoſed to have commenced immediately after the deluge, and continued ever ſince by ſlow degrees in proportion to man's advancement in virtue and piety. And hence I preſume may in ſome meaſure be conceived one reaſon why God, in his dealings with our forefathers, made *temporal* rewards and puniſhments the only ſanctions of his laws. The whole ſcheme of redemption was too ex-

[b] *Pſ.* lxvii. 4, 6.

tenſive

tenſive and ſublime to be comprehended by men, whoſe intellectual as well as moral faculties had not yet recovered the ſhock they had received by the fall; the myſteries therefore of a *ſpiritual* deliverance (though by far the moſt excellent part, nay, properly ſpeaking the whole of the promiſe, becauſe *natural* bleſſings are the genuine effects and neceſſary conſequence of *ſpiritual* ones) the myſteries, I ſay, of a *ſpiritual* deliverance, not being accommodated to the infirmities of an infant capacity, were not fully revealed; but ſuggeſted only by general hints, repreſented by perſonal types, and ſhadowed under ceremonial figures: whereas the removal of temporal evils, the ſad effects of which they could not but perceive and feel, being more likely to operate upon them was expreſsly made the [c] baſis

[c] *If ye walk in my ſtatutes and keep my commandments and do them, then I will give you rain in due ſeaſon, and the land ſhall yield her increaſe, &c. &c. Levit.* xxvi. 3, 4. &c.—On the contrary, diſobedience was threatened with temporal puniſhments —*But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all theſe commandments; I will alſo do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, &c. I will bring the land into deſolation. ibid.* 14. 16. 32. This curſe was afterwards on account of their diſobedience carried into execution, and

of all covenants and the reward of their obedience: God even by this method ſtill carrying on in an efficacious, though ſecret, manner his gracious plan of making the recovery of the *natural* the conſequence of the reſtoration of the *moral* world. For this gradual reparation of the breaches made in nature (excluſive of the powerful motives to virtue and piety, which the proportion it bore to their obedience ſupplied them with) could not but raiſe and cheriſh in them a comfortable confidence, not only that they would at laſt be totally cloſed up, but that the other part alſo of the promiſe would in God's own time have its full completion.

To keep this confidence alive and ſupport men in their ſtate of mortality with the hopes of a reſtoration to life, God

and remains *viſibly* in full force even to this day; bearing ample teſtimony to the veracity of God, and conſequently affording hope and aſſurance that (as he has *turned a fruitful land into barrenneſs for their wickedneſs* ſo, likewiſe) *when they follow after righteouſneſs and ſeek the Lord, he will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waſte places, and he will make her wilderneſs like Eden, and her deſert like the garden of the Lord. Iſ.* li. 1, 3.

had been pleaſed (as has been before obſerved) to give them an earneſt and pledge of it in *Enoch*; and he afterwards renewed it in *Elijah*; both of whom were on account of their exemplary lives tranſlated from this world without taſting death. Yet, notwithſtanding theſe notices, and the inſight which the more enlightened among them had into the ſpiritual meaning of the types, figures, and promiſes, (of which whoever reads the xith chapter to the *Hebrews* with attention can have no doubt) yet the generality of them ſeem not to have had any other idea of the redemption by the *Meſſiah*, than that of a temporal or earthly redemption. It was the goſpel alone that [d] *brought immortality to light*; [e] *to the promiſes of the life that now is*, adding the promiſes of *that which is to come*. Even the *Prophets* themſelves, though in their days the oeconomy of grace was very much opened and unfolded, ſeem not in their promiſes to reach beyond the grave; the bleſſings contained in their predictions ſtop ſhort of eternity:

[d] 2 *Tim.* i. 10. [e] 1 *Tim.* iv. 8.

they

they all appear to tend to, center and terminate in, that ἀποκατάστασις πάντων [f] *that reſtitution of all things*, which St. *Peter* aſſures us *God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began*; [g] *for which the earneſt expectation of the creature waiteth*; to which the whole creation, animate and inanimate, ſenſitive and rational, progreſſively aſpires.

Some fragments of this doctrine are to be found in both Jewiſh and Heathen antiquity. It was a favourite dogma of the eaſtern and greek philoſophers, eſpecially thoſe of the *Pythagorean* and *Platonic* ſchools; from the laſt of which the period in which it was expected to happen was called the *Platonic year* [h]. An opinion, ſaid

[f] *Acts* iii. 21. [g] *Rom.* viii. 19.

[h] It was likewiſe held by the *Stoics*; and indeed its univerſality has been inconteſtibly proved by an ingenious writer of our own in his learned, though fanciful, *theory of the new heavens and the new earth*. From whatever ſource it was derived to the more ancient philoſophers, the later Romans in all probability borrowed it from the Jews; ſince *Virgil* in his famous *Eclogue* aſſigns to it the very ſame period that the Jews did, viz.—*the advent of the Meſſiah*: though the Jews by ſo doing evidently confound the *two advents* mentioned by their prophets.

to have been handed down from *Elias*, prevailed much among the Jews that this bleſſed ſtate would take place and be accompliſhed in the ſeventh millenary; and of this *ſeptenary* ſtate of reſt, joy, and triumph they conceived their [i] *ſabbaths* to be figurative. *The Sabbath*, ſaith *Zoar* on *Geneſis*, *The Sabbath what is it? A figure of the land of the living*, i. e. *of the world or age to come, the age of ſouls, the age of conſolations*, meaning thereby, according to the known idiom of the Jewiſh language, the days of the *Meſſiah*; who was always ſpoken of by them as the *comforter and the conſolation of Iſrael*. *The obſervation of the Sabbath*, ſays [k] another great maſter in *Iſrael, is founded upon faith in God; for no one will obſerve the Sabbath, except he that confeſſes that the world will be renovated, and that he will renovate it who created it out of nothing*.

Ipſe opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo;

as the [l] *Roman* mythologiſt, not without

[i] See *Whitby* on *Heb.* iv. 9.
[k] *D. Kimchi* on *Iſ.* lvi. 6.
[l] *Ovid. Metam.* l. 1.

copying

copying after ſome *Jewiſh* original, very expreſſively ſtiles him.

But the *Jubilee*, or ſabbath of years, being the greateſt of the typical revolutions, was therefore looked upon as more particularly figurative of the grand *Sabbatiſm* of the people of God. The *Meſſiah*, cry all the Rabbies with one voice, *redeemeth on a Jubilee*. [m] *In a Jubilee the Shechinah will be redemption, ranſom, and ending of ſabbatiſm to Iſrael.* Accordingly if the computation made by Archbiſhop *Uſher* be a juſt one, it was on a year of *Jubilee*, the very laſt before the total deſtruction of the Jewiſh polity, that our bleſſed Saviour preached the glad tidings of ſalvation. On that year he entered upon his prophetic office, and having read in the ſynagogue the paſſage out of the prophet *Iſaiah* which I have before recited, and which deſcribes the *Meſſiah* as proclaiming the

[m] *Zoar* on *Gen.* See Biſhop *Patrick*'s *Commentary* on *Levit.* 25. *Zoar* or *Zohar* is a cabaliſtical commentary on the law, to which the Jews aſcribe great antiquity making it older than the *Talmud*. It is however by ſome learned men ſuppoſed to have been written by *R. Perets* in the 13th century.

Jubilee, he ſhut the book and ſaid, *This day is this ſcripture fulfilled.*

The *Jubilee* was the moſt conſiderable of all the ſolemnities which God enjoined to the Iſraelites. It was *a year of reſt*, they were neither to ſow nor to reap; *of liberty*, all ſlaves were releaſed; *of reſtitution of every thing to its priſtine ſtate*, all debts were remitted, and all lands however alienated reſtored to their original proprietor. It began on the *day of expiation*, a day of faſting, humiliation, and confeſſion of ſins; therefore a time of penitence: [n] *it brought men back*, ſays *Maimonides, to their primitive ſtate, which is the effect of repentance.* And who knows not that *repentance* is the firſt evangelical duty? It was the ſum and ſubſtance of what our Saviour's fore-runner preached as preparatory to the reception of the goſpel, [o] *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; what our Saviour himſelf firſt enjoined [p] *repent and believe the goſpel:* it is always

[n] *Maim. de pœnâ.* c. 7. See *Voiſin de jubilæo.*
[o] *Matth.* iii. 2. [p] *Mark* i. 15.

men-

mentioned previous to the remiſſion of ſins as an indiſpenſible condition for obtaining mercy, *it behoved*, ſays St. *Luke*, [q] *that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name*. The analogy between the *remiſſion of debts* in the Jubilee and the *remiſſion of ſins* under the goſpel covenant is obvious to every underſtanding; and the releaſe of all ſlaves, the total ceſſation of the toil and labour of agriculture, and the reſtoration of every man to his poſſeſſions, tribe, and family, were plainly ſymbolical of that *acceptable year of the Lord*, wherein man was to be delivered from the ſervitude he was held under by ſin and Satan, and reſtored to all the bleſſings which had been loſt by the fall. If a Hebrew had ſold himſelf to a ſtranger or proſelyte, even he had the benefit of the Jubilee; but a price was to be paid for his redemption, by himſelf if he was able; if not, [r] *one of his brethren*, ſays the law, *may redeem him*. [s] *This Redeemer*, ſays *R. Bechai, is the Meſſiah the ſon of David, of the*

[q] *Luke* xxiv. 47.
[r] *Levit.* xxv. 48.
[s] *Patrick. ibid.*

tribe of Judah, that bleſſed Redeemer, who to free us from the obligation of the law became obedient to the law, and therefore condeſcended to take our nature upon him that he might have a legal right, the right of *conſanguinity*, to redeem us.

The reſtoration of every part of nature in conſequence of this redemption, thus ſhadowed out under this ſolemnity, is clearly and without all ambiguity predicted by all the prophets. "[t] The kingdom "of *Chriſt* in this world being arrived to "its full extent and growth: truth and "peace, charity and juſtice, the true faith, "the ſincere piety, the generous and un-"affected virtue which Chriſtianity teaches "and preſcribes, ſhall reign and flouriſh "over all the earth." [u] *He that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jeruſalem ſhall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jeruſalem:* [w] *the people ſhall be all righteous*; [x] *the iniquity of Iſrael*

[t] *Scott*'s *Chriſtian life.*
[u] *Iſ.* iv. 3.
[w] *Iſ.* lx. 21.
[x] *Jerem.* l. 20.

ſhall

ſhall be ſought for, and there ſhall be none; and the ſins of Judah, and they ſhall not be found; [y] for *God will ſet his ſanctuary in the midſt of them for evermore; his tabernacle ſhall be alſo with them, and he will dwell with them, and he will be their God and they ſhall be his people.*

When *man* is thus reſtored to his original holineſs, the *earth* likewiſe will recover its original fertility; for as it was *curſed* with man, ſo will it alſo be *bleſſed* with man. [z] *The wilderneſs and ſolitary place ſhall be glad, and the deſert ſhall rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe:* [a] *the plowman ſhall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that ſoweth the ſeed:* [b] *the mountains ſhall drop new wine, and the hills ſhall flow with milk:* [c] *God will hear the heavens, and they ſhall hear the earth, and the earth ſhall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil.* With this outward proſperity are always joined univerſal benevolence, peace, and harmony; and the whole is attributed to an increaſe

[y] *Ezech.* xxxvii. 26, 27.
[z] *Iſ.* xxxv. 1.
[a] *Am.* ix. 13.
[b] *Joel* iii. 18.
[c] *Hoſ.* ii. 21, 22.

of

of knowledge in the duties of religion and advancement in the practice of holineſs. [d] *They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the ſea; for the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.*

Theſe paſſages were underſtood in their natural and literal meaning, not only by the Jews, but [e] by the moſt learned and orthodox Chriſtians in the ages immediately following the apoſtles; [f] but the *literal* interpretation and the doctrine contained in it at length loſt ground, the profeſſors of it having the odious charge of *Judaiſm* fixed upon them by ſome warm men, who were too fond of introducing on all occaſions allegorical and ſpiritual refinement. But why did they not charge St. *Peter* likewiſe with *Judaiſm*, who writing to the Jews declares in plain terms

[d] *Iſ.* xi. 9.—xxxii. 17.

[e] *Papias, Juſtin Martyr, Irenæus, Apollinarius, Tertullian, Victor, Lactantius.*

[f] See Mr. *Mede.*

his

his expectation of this bleſſed ſtate? God had ſaid by his prophet *Iſaiah*, [g] *Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth*; and the apoſtle clearly confeſſes his underſtanding him according to the plain and natural import of the words, when ſpeaking of the real and ſubſtantial changes brought by the Lord upon the *material* world he adds, [h] *But according to his promiſe we alſo do expect new heavens and a new earth.* Why was not the ſame objection made to St. *John*, who "in a plain and "ſimple narration free from allegory and "involution of prophetical figures," not only alludes to but quotes the deſcription given by the prophet of the happineſs of this renovated world? [i] *They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more—God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow*

[g] *Iſ.* lxv. 17. In what ſenſe the Jews underſtood this prophecy is plain from *R. Saadiah Gaon* as quoted by Dr. *Whitby* on 2 St. *Pet.* iii. 13. *In the end of the world there ſhall be to the Jews a world full of joy and exultation, ſo that their heaven and earth ſhall be as it were new.*

[h] 2 *Pet.* iii. 13.

[i] *Iſ.* xxv. 8.—xlix. 10.—lxv. 19. *Revel.* vii. 15.—xxi. 4.

nor

nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain. There cannot be plainer words or expreſſed in a more ordinary manner; and yet they muſt be allegorized before the removal of thoſe infirmities under which nature labours can be denied. Thoſe that do it ſeem to me to be guilty of the ſame error with the Jews by applying that to the [k] *firſt* which is meant of the *ſecond* coming of *Chriſt*; with this difference however, that where as the *Jews* will admit of no *Meſſiah* whoſe reign does not entirely conſiſt of external ſplendor and temporal power; theſe *Chriſtians* on the contrary baniſh from their idea of *Chriſt*'s kingdom every circumſtance that does not exactly

[k] The old prophets (for the moſt part) ſpeak of the coming of *Chriſt* indefinitely and altogether without that diſtinction of the *firſt* and *ſecond* coming which the goſpel out of *Daniel* hath taught us. And ſo conſequently they ſpake of the things to be at *Chriſt*'s coming indefinitely and altogether; which we, who are now more fully informed by the revelation of the goſpel of a twofold coming, muſt apply each of them to its proper time; thoſe things that befit the ſtate of his *firſt* coming unto it, and ſuch things as befit the ſtate of his *ſecond* coming unto his ſecond; and what befits both alike may be applied unto both. *Mede.* This diſtinction is remarked and urged by *Juſtin Martyr* in ſeveral parts of his dialogue with *Trypho* a Jew.

coincide

coincide with the mean and lowly appearance of the ſon of man. But why ſhould the prophecies concerning our Saviour's abaſement and humiliation be always taken *literally*, and thoſe that foretel his exaltation and glorious appearance be never underſtood but in a *figurative* ſenſe? Ought we not rather, as we have ſeen the former punctually verified, be from thence inſpired with hope and confidence that the latter likewiſe will in God's own time be exactly accompliſhed? Far be it from me to ſuppoſe that there is no ſpiritual meaning couched under the letter; but while we allegorize every paſſage, and confine all the prophecies abſolutely and without exception to the firſt advent of *Chriſt*, are we not in ſome meaſure partakers of the crime of thoſe [l] *ſcoffers* who St. *Peter* tells us *ſhall come in the laſt days, ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?* [m] do we

[l] 2 *Pet.* iii. 3, 4.

[m] See *univ. hiſt. vol.* iii. p. 39.—*Mede*'s *works*, p. 670. To ſuppoſe thoſe prophecies (which foretel *the viſibility and univerſality of Chriſt*'s *church, accompanied with perfect peace, proſperity and holineſs*, and thoſe which foretel the *flouriſhing*

not by ſo doing join iſſue with the Jews, and confirm them in their obſtinacy and infidelity?

Very different was the Apoſtle's method of arguing with them—[n] *repent ye and be converted* εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν *for the blotting out of your ſins* ὅπως ἂν *that ſo the times of refreſhing* ἀναψύχεως of reſt or comfort *may come from the preſence of the Lord, and that he may ſend Jeſus Chriſt, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens muſt receive until the times of* "reſtitution of all things." Theſe times are here, as in all the writings of the

flouriſhing ſtate of the Jewiſh church and nation) to have already received their utmoſt completion is, in my judgement, to give too great an advantage to the Jews and in effect to acknowledge that they never were, nor will be fulfilled in *their natural and obvious* ſenſe. Whereas on the other ſide to aſſert that many prophecies relating to the *Meſſiah* are already fulfilled in our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*—and withal to maintain that ſeveral others relate to his *ſecond coming* and their accompliſhment ſhall uſher in or accompany that his glorious appearance.—I ſay, the obſerving this diſtinction, effectually anſwers all the arguments which the *Jews* make uſe of to ſupport themſelves in their incredulity; it diſcovers a perfect harmony and correſpondence between the prophecies of the *old* and *new* teſtament, &c. *Lowth's preface.*

[n] *Acts* iii. 19, &c. See *Mede, Hammond, Raphelius.*

prophets,

prophets, made to coincide with the coming of *Chriſt*, and deſcribed as the effect and conſequence of the repentance and converſion of the Jews; upon which the gentiles flowing in [o] *all the ends of the world ſhall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before him.* That this flouriſhing eſtate of the church was not abſolutely and fully to take place at our Saviour's firſt coming, is evident from his inſtructing his diſciples to pray to God that his *kingdom* might *come*; for "that which is to-come may "indeed be in its progreſs, but has not "yet attained to that ſtate of perfection "which it is to have." But that it will take place before the reſurrection is, I think, likewiſe evident; becauſe St. *Paul* tells us that immediately after the reſurrection [p] *Chriſt ſhall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father.*

Then indeed will be totally compleated that glorious ſcheme of redemption, which has been gradually working ever ſince

[o] *Pſ.* xxii. 27. [p] 1 *Cor.* xv. 24.

man's

man's unhappy fall: God, whoſe [q] *tender mercies are over all his works*, has never forgotten that upon a review of them he was pleaſed to pronounce them to be good; he will reſtore them all to their primitive beauty and perfection; but above all will he remember man the lord of the creation, and reinſtate him in the full poſſeſſion of that happineſs, and thoſe high privileges which he enjoyed during his innocence; with this gracious addition that, whereas eternal life was only implied in the covenant of *nature*, it is in the covenant of *grace* through the ſufferings and merits of our bleſſed Saviour clearly revealed and expreſsly promiſed: for [r] *where ſin abounded grace did much more abound*.

The capacities of man as an individual are progreſſive; ſo are thoſe of human nature taken collectively; and [s] God has always been pleaſed to accommodate his diſpenſations to this law of progreſſion:

[q] *Pſ.* cxlv. 9. [r] *Rom.* v. 20.

[s] See my late learned and pious friend Dr. *Durell*'s diſſertation on the character of the patriarch *Abraham*.

he

he brings mankind from nature to grace, from grace to glory. We (to bring at laſt this diſcourſe to ourſelves) are in a ſtate of grace, in a middle ſtate between nature and glory, and therefore though ſtill in a great degree ſubject to the infirmities of the one, yet at the ſame time enlightened with ſome rays reflected from the other. We have received the gift of faith [t] *the firſt fruits of the ſpirit*; yet much of corruption cleaves to us; our original ſin, though pardoned, is as yet but imperfectly purged: we are not yet arrived to that bleſſed ſtate which is promiſed, when all evil both *natural* and *moral* ſhall be totally removed; yet that they are greatly abated no one can deny without doing violence to his own experience compared with the hiſtories of former times. The earth, thanks be to God, bears her fruit in due ſeaſon, neither does the general face of it bear many marks of that curſe which prevented it [u] *when it was tilled from yielding her ſtrength*. Though the

[t] *Rom.* viii. 23. [u] *Gen.* iv. 12.

practice of univerſal righteouſneſs, which is the deſign of the goſpel, is far from being eſtabliſhed; we do not however find that mankind in general gives into thoſe abominable exceſſes, of which, to the diſgrace of human nature, hiſtory both *ſacred* and *profane* records ſuch frequent examples. That the influence of Chriſtianity with regard to its moſt diſtinguiſhing character is not totally loſt, that ſpirit of benevolence which is viſible in our public inſtitutions is among ſeveral others an illuſtrious proof. That increaſe of all and eſpecially of *ſacred* literature, for which every age becomes more and more conſpicuous, and which cannot in this place without the higheſt ingratitude be paſſed over in ſilence; that knowledge of God, of his works, and of his laws, which a *Chriſtian* of a moderate capacity and reflection has in a degree greatly ſuperior to the deepeſt *philoſopher* of *paganiſm*, are a happy prelude and pledge of thoſe more enlightened days

days, when [w] *the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the ſea*; [x] *for they ſhall know me from the leaſt of them unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord.*

Who does not feel a conſcious dignity and a laudable ambition of proceeding [y] *from ſtrength to ſtrength,* [z] *from glory to glory,* at the very idea of that high excellence with which the nature he partakes of will be ennobled? If however any ſhould, upon the reflection of his own perſonal inferiority, find humiliating and mortifying thoughts ariſe: let him compare his condition with that of thoſe who lived in former ages; of thoſe who are not yet enlightened by [a] *the ſun of righteouſneſs,* who even now [b] *ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death,* and he will find abundant matter of conſolation, joy, and triumph: let him re-

[w] *Iſ.* xi. 9.
[x] *Jer.* xxxi. 34.
[y] *Pſ.* lxxxiv. 7.
[z] 2 *Cor.* iii. 18.
[a] *Mal.* iv. 2.
[b] *Luke* i. 79.

collect that as [c] God adapts his revelations to the capacities of mankind in general, so likewise does he his demands to the abilities of individuals; that, if he has not granted him perfection, he will not exact perfection; that, provided his intention is upright and his obedience sincere, his great creator will through the powerful merits and intercession of his redeemer overlook his defects, pardon his failings, and by the preventing, strengthening, and sanctifying grace of his holy spirit enable him to perform an acceptable duty. If he does not in this world converse with those only [d] *which are written in the Lamb's book of life*; if he feels anxiety, pain, sickness and other harbingers of his approaching dissolution, let him remember that to a true Christian death is a passage unto life, [e] *unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innu-*

[c] Σύμμετρα ταῖς ἡλικίαις προσφέρει παιδεύματα ὁ Θεὸς. *Theodor. har. fab.* l. v. c. 11.

[d] *Rev.* xxi. 27. [e] *Heb.* xii. 22, 23, 24.

merable

merable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

SERMON IV.

EPHES. i. 3.

Bleſſed be God and the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt.

A *Seeming* or *real* obſcurity in the original has given occaſion to ſeveral different interpretations of the latter part of this paſſage. The words, in the explaining of which learned men diſagree, are ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις Χριϛῷ, expreſſed in our verſion by *in heavenly places in Chriſt*. Some by the words τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις underſtand heavenly *things* not *places*;

meaning either the ſupernatural gifts then imparted to the church, or that ſtate of immortality in heaven to which we hope to be exalted through *Chriſt*. But this expoſition makes no diſtinction between this word and the εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ *ſpiritual bleſſings* juſt before mentioned. Beſides the Apoſtle conſtantly uſes the word to ſignify heavenly *places* not *things*; and in this very epiſtle in three different paſſages, where the context unqueſtionably confines it to this ſenſe. Thus in the *twentieth* verſe of *this* chapter, *he raiſed him from the dead and ſet him at his own right hand* ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις *in heavenly places*; and in the *ſixth* verſe of the *next* chapter, *hath raiſed us together and made us ſit together* ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις *in heavenly places*; and in the *tenth* verſe of the *third* chapter, *to the intent that now to the principalities and powers* ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις "in heavenly places" *might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God*. And this obſervation will lead us to the true meaning of a parallel expreſſion in the *eighteenth* verſe of *this* chapter—*the eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened that ye may know what is*

the

the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις not *in the ſaints*, as our verſion has it, but *in the holy places*, i. e. how glorious an inheritance is purchaſed for us in heaven. But to return—There are who make the words *in Chriſt* to be emphatical and expreſſive of that *gathering together* (as it is called in verſe the tenth) compacting and uniting together all people, Jews and Gentiles *in him*, in one church of which he is the head. [a] Others again think that the dative Χριστῷ is put inſtead of the genitive Χριστοῦ by an ellipſis of the participle οὖσι, making the words τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις Χριστῷ equivalent to τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις τοῖς οὖσι Χριστῷ heavenly things *of Chriſt* or *belonging unto Chriſt*.

All theſe interpretations contain ſound truth, but do not ſeem to me to expreſs the Apoſtle's meaning. The paſſage indeed I take to be elliptical; but I think that the ellipſis ſhould be ſupplied not with

[a] *Raphelius* ſeems to adopt this opinion, and brings authorities for it; but I do not think that any of his examples are fully to the point.

οὖσι

οὖσι but ὄντι. *Bleſſed be God and the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings through Chriſt* ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ὄντι *after*, or, *in conſequence of his aſcenſion into heaven.* Whilſt he was on earth *the holy ſpirit* (as we are told by [b] St. *John*) *was not yet, becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified.* But when, upon his aſcenſion and ſeſſion at the right hand of God, he took the full and complete exerciſe of the offices conſequent upon his mediatorial kingdom, he then by his miniſtry and interceſſion obtained whatever was neceſſary for the comfort, inſtruction, and ſupport of his church. [c] *Being exalted to the right hand of God* (ſays St. *Peter* on the day of *Pentecoſt*) *and having received of the father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this which you now ſee and hear.* This had been predicted by the royal prophet. [d] *Thou haſt aſcended on high; thou haſt led captivity captive; thou haſt received gifts for men.* And this prophecy our Apoſtle in this very

[b] *John* vii. 39. [c] *Acts* ii. 33.
[d] *Pſ.* lxviii. 18.

epiſtle

epiſtle applies to the gracious diſpenſation of the holy ſpirit after our Lord's triumphant aſcenſion, which it is obſervable that he mentions as of neceſſity preceding the grant of ſpiritual gifts,—[e] *he aſcended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things.*

Theſe bleſſed effects of *Chriſt*'s glorification are by our Apoſtle in one place called [f] *the firſt fruits of the ſpirit*, in another [g] *the earneſt of the ſpirit*, and in this chapter more emphatically ſtill [h] *the earneſt of our inheritance*. Now theſe terms *firſt fruits* and *earneſt* plainly intimate that the divine communications and comforts of the ſpirit, with which ſincere Chriſtians are favoured in this world, are in their nature ſimilar, however inferior in degree, to thoſe that ſhall hereafter conſtitute our happineſs in heaven. As there is a twofold redemption, ſo is there likewiſe a twofold beatitude: the *firſt* redemption, conſiſting of abſolution from the guilt and

[e] *Epheſ.* iv. 10.
[f] *Rom.* viii. 23.
[g] 2 *Cor.* i. 22.
[h] V. 14.

condem-

condemnation of paſt ſins, we enjoy in this life; the ſecond, being an advancement to a ſtate of incorruption and immortality, we expect through faith and hope. The ſanctification of our minds, being in the beſt of us here on earth only initial and incomplete, is attended with only an initial and incomplete happineſs; yet are they both a preparation for, a tendency unto, a prelude and foretaſte of their completion and perfection. They are, ſays St. *Paul, an* [i] *earneſt of our inheritance until the purchaſed poſſeſſion*, i. e. until the *ſecond redemption*, when we ſhall be put in poſſeſſion of the inheritance purchaſed for us.

Twice did God by a voice from heaven teſtify that our bleſſed Saviour was his beloved ſon; at his [k] *baptiſm* and [l] *transfiguration*; an unanſwerable argument againſt the *Socinians* who preſume to aſſert that he was firſt made the ſon of God by his reſurrection. But the reaſon of my making

[i] *Epheſ.* i. 14. [k] *Matth.* iii. 17. *Mark* i. 11.
[l] *Matth.* xvii. 5. *Mark* ix. 7. *Luke* ix. 35.

the

the obſervation at preſent is, becauſe the occaſion of this twofold ſupernatural declaration of the dignity of our redeemer, ſeems to me to have a reſpect to the diſtinction I have, after others, made of a twofold redemption; the firſt occaſion was his *baptiſm*, when he was inaugurated into his prophetical office, and began to preach the *firſt redemption*, *remiſſion of ſins*: the ſecond occaſion of this divine teſtimony, was his *transfiguration*, when he was pleaſed to give three of his diſciples a glimpſe and pledge of that ſplendor, with which [m] *our vile bodies* ſhall be inveſted when they are *faſhioned like unto his glorious body*: i. e. at the *ſecond redemption*, when we ſhall be releaſed not only from the guilt but from the puniſhment of ſin; for ſin ſhall be left buried in the grave, and the ſoul being purged and perfected ſhall be joined to the body ſpiritualized and fitted for a celeſtial ſtate; and both together enjoy eternal life.

With theſe *ſpiritual bleſſings*, the com-

[m] *Phil.* iii. 21.

pletion

pletion of all bleſſings, *has God* more particularly *bleſſed us in conſequence of Chriſt's aſcenſion into heaven.* It is the exemplary aſſimilative cauſe of ours. As he died and roſe again for us, that [n] *we*, by dying unto ſin, might *be planted together in the likeneſs of his death*, and by henceforth living unto God, *in the likeneſs of his reſurrection*; ſo was he glorified that [o] *we alſo might be glorified together.* On the day of his aſcenſion he took poſſeſſion of heaven for us [p] *that where he is we might be alſo.* [q] *He is entered as our fore-runner*, as the repreſentative of his church and people: for as the *natural* ſo likewiſe the *myſtical* body is partaker of all the honours of its head: his advancement is the advancement of us all, his aſcenſion the ſurety of ours; and therefore St. *Paul* to denote in the ſtrongeſt manner their inſeparable connexion triumphantly joins them together, and ſpeaks of *our* exaltation as a thing already accompliſhed in conſequence and virtue of

[n] *Rom.* vi. 5. [o] *Rom.* viii. 17.

[p] *John* xiv. 3.

[q] *Heb.* vi. 20. ἔνθεν ἡ κεφαλὴ, ἐκεῖ καὶ τὸ σῶμα· οὐδενὶ μέσῳ διέρχεται ἡ κεφαλὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα. *Chryſ. in Eph.* λ. 3.

the

the exaltation of *Chriſt*; [r] *he* hath *quickened us together with Chriſt, and* hath *raiſed us up together and* made *us ſit together in heavenly places through Chriſt Jeſus.*

To render the true and full underſtanding of this doctrine more eaſy and familiar, it may not be amiſs to take a ſhort view of that inſtitution which was typical and figurative of it; and which our great Apoſtle in his ſublime epiſtle to the *Hebrews* conſtantly appeals to as explanatory of this great myſtery: and this I ſhall do the more willingly, becauſe it will at the ſame time illuſtrate and confirm that main article of the Chriſtian faith, that great ſource and original of all Chriſtian privileges—the vicarious puniſhment of *Chriſt* and the piacular virtue of his blood.

We are told by St. *Peter* that [s] *the prophets—enquired and ſearched diligently what or what manner of time the ſpirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify.* By the *prophets* here are in an enlarged and compre-

[r] *Epheſ.* ii. 5, 6. [s] 1 *Pet.* i. 10, 11.

henſive

henſive ſenſe meant all the *faithful* from the beginning of the world, to whom the bleſſing of the *Meſſiah* was promiſed or revealed; all the *patriarchs* who [t] *having ſeen the promiſes afar off were perſuaded of them and embraced them*; all the true *Iſraelites* who may without impropriety be ſaid to have believed in *Chriſt* even before his coming: And this I verily believe to be our Apoſtle's meaning when he tells the *Epheſians* that the Jews were [u] προηλπικότες ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ; which words, taken according to this their plain and original import, ſtrongly mark a diſtinction made between the Jews and the Gentiles; which diſtinction is entirely loſt in our and other verſions—"[w] *that we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory*"—"we (*Jews*)

[t] *Heb.* xi. 13.

[u] Προελπίζειν dici poſſunt, et qui prius quam alii ſperant, et qui ſpem de aliquâ re præcipiunt. Priorem ſententiam defendit *Beza* tanquam ſolam veram, alteram prorſus rejiciens quæ *Ambroſii* eſt, ſtatuentis Apoſtolos in *judaiſmo* quoque verſantes tamen ſpem habuiſſe in *Chriſto* venturo, utpote quem ex prophetarum oraculis expectarint. Diſtinguit enim *Paulus* Judæos a Gentilibus hoc diſcrimine, quod illi in *Chriſto* etiam venturo ſpem poſuerint, hi vero ante evangelium fuerint ſine *Chriſto*, ut infra 2. 12. dicit; ἦτε ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ. *Raphel. in loc.*

[w] *Epheſ.* i. 12.

who

" who hoped in Chriſt *before* his coming;" in whom " ye (*Gentiles*) alſo hoped *after* " that ye heard the word of truth, the " goſpel of ſalvation." The *Jews* did hope in *Chriſt before* his coming. [x] *For the hope of Iſrael*, ſays St. *Paul* ſpeaking to them, *I am bound with this chain:* And to [y] *Agrippa* (a prince *expert in all cuſtoms and queſtions which were among the Jews*) *now I ſtand and am judged for the hope of the promiſe made of God unto our fathers; unto which promiſe our twelve tribes inſtantly ſerving God day and night hope to come.*

God, having from the beginning of time conceived in his eternal mind the idea of the redemption, gave fallen man continual notices of it, repreſenting it under different figures and emblems; beyond which and through which the believers of old, according to the meaſure of revelation granted them, looked forwards to their ſubſtance, and firmly relying on the veracity of God [z] *obtained a*

[x] *Acts* xxviii. 20.
[y] *Acts* xxvi. 3, 6, 7.
[z] *Heb.* xi. 39.

good report through faith though they received not the promiſe. If they therefore, in thoſe days of uncertainty, directed their minds through the obſcurity of preſent ſhadows towards the light to come; ſurely a Chriſtian, on whom that light ſhines in full glory, muſt find a ſingular pleaſure in throwing back his eye upon thoſe models and portraitures of his ſalvation; the exact likeneſs of which in every minute circumſtance muſt convince him that they were ſketched out by the hand of God himſelf; that both the ſhadow and ſubſtance, the type and antitype, proceeded from him who is [a] *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the firſt and the laſt.*

The firſt emblematical notice given of a future redemption, was undoubtedly by the inſtitution of ſacrifices; [b] which method of worſhip, whatever is aſſerted by

[a] *Revel.* xxii. 13.

[b] See among others *Shuckford.* V. 1. One would think, ſays biſhop *Patrick* on *Geneſ.* iv. 3. that *Plato* had ſome notion of this, when he forbids his lawgiver (in his *Epinomis*) to make any alteration in the rites of ſacrificing, becauſe οὐ δυνατὸν εἶδέναι τὴ θνητῇ τῶν τοιούτων περὶ *it is not poſſible for our mortal nature to know any thing about ſuch matters.*

men

men ſtrangely averſe to any interpoſition of the deity, has ſurely no foundation in nature, and therefore muſt have been ſuggeſted by divine revelation. It is probable, from the uſe we find made of them upon God's future treating with mankind, that he was at their firſt inſtitution pleaſed to enter into a covenant with man, of which a ſacrifice was the ſeal and ratification. That there were conditions, which are a neceſſary part of a covenant, required of man; and that one principal condition was *faith*, can admit of no doubt; for St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of the firſt ſacrifice upon record, expreſsly ſays, that [c] *by* faith *Abel offered a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain*. Now what is *faith* but a firm reliance on the promiſes of God? and what had God promiſed but a *redeemer?* Thus therefore were ſacrifices not only typical repreſentations of the ſacrifice of the promiſed redeemer, whoſe blood was to be the ſeal of a new covenant; but moreover God's acceptance of them was a ſacramental ſign and pledge of his reconcilia-

[c] *Heb.* xi. 4.

tion to man through *faith* in him, the anticipating and retroactive virtue of whose blood would extend the benefits of salvation through all ages. [d] *If thou doest well*, says God to *Cain*, i. e. if thou offerest thy sacrifice from a true principle, *shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door*, i. e. thy sacrifice shall not make atonement for thy sin.

This practice of substituting an innocent animal in the room of the offender, was religiously transmitted by *Noah* after the flood to all his descendents, and observed universally by all nations, however they differed in other religious rites. But its divine origin and typical design being together with the other parts of patriarchal worship forgotten, God was pleased to separate a peculiar people for the preservation of true religion and faith in the promised saviour. With them he made a new covenant, ratifying it with the usual seal of sacrifice, which he again expressly

[d] *Genes.* iv. 7.

enjoined

enjoined with ſuch additional circumſtances and ceremonies, [e] as plainly denoted its expiatory quality and typical relation to that grand atonement, of which it was intended to keep up a memorial.

I might here run a parallel, which would be found to correſpond with the minuteſt exactneſs, between all the particulars attending the legal ſacrifices and that of our bleſſed Saviour: but, as thoſe offered on the great day of atonement had a more eſpecial regard to it, I ſhall content myſelf with conſidering a few of the ceremonies then uſed; which I hope will ſufficiently explain and fully confirm the doctrines I have juſt now advanced.

[f] *Aaron* (ſays God himſelf) *ſhall lay both his hands upon the live goat, and confeſs over him all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael and all their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat.*

[e] See *Outram de Sacrificiis*, l. i. c. 18. and *Berriman's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.*

[f] *Levit.* xvi. 21.

This form of impoſition of hands and confeſſion of ſins was uſed in all ſacrifices, and is very expreſſive of transferring the ſins confeſſed upon the victim, and devoting it to bear the puniſhment of them. Upon all other occaſions the victim thus loaded with guilt was brought to the altar, and ſlain inſtead of the offender: but on this more ſolemn occaſion two goats made up but one ſin-offering: one of them was offered in ſacrifice, the other was ſent away alive; by the firſt was repreſented our Saviour's being [g] *delivered* to death *for our offences*, by the ſecond his being *raiſed again for our juſtification*.

On that day only did the high-prieſt, and none but him, enter into the holy of holies burning incenſe; and, having dipped his fingers in the blood of the ſeveral victims offered, he ſprinkled it towards the mercy ſeat, and pronounced a ſolemn bleſſing on the people, uttering on that occaſion and no other the peculiar and incommunicable name of God. We may

[g] *Rom.* iv. 25.

here

here firſt obſerve, that it was not till after the expiation of himſelf, as well as of the prieſts and people, that the high-prieſt preſumed to enter into the moſt holy place: for there is an inſeparable connection between holineſs and glory; to ſet which in the ſtrongeſt light *Chriſt* himſelf, our great *high-prieſt* (though he had even during his ſtay upon earth an abſolute inherent holineſs, yet as he had taken our ſins upon himſelf, even he) could not, loaded as he was though with imputed impurities, enter into the true holy of holies, till he had made that full and perfect ſatisfaction for them, which as our ſurety he had undertaken to make, to the juſtice of God: but a compleat atonement being made, and [h] *ſin put away by the ſacrifice of himſelf, he entered, not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us.*

The incenſe offered, and the blood ſprinkled, were undoubtedly ſymbols of

[h] *Heb.* ix. 26.

Chriſt's preſenting himſelf with his blood in the heavens, exhibiting in the preſence of God the merits of his ſufferings, and together with them [i] *offering up* (as the *Angel of the covenant* is repreſented to do in the *Revelations*) *the prayers of the ſaints*, rendering them acceptable to God through his own efficacious mediation and interceſſion.

After the legal high-prieſt had gone through all theſe ſymbolical ceremonies, he pronounced the ſolemn bleſſing.— [k] JEHOVAH *bleſs thee and keep thee.* JEHOVAH *make his face to ſhine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.* JEHOVAH *lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.* Whatever myſtery may be contained in

[i] *Revel.* viii. 3.

[k] *Numb.* vi. 24, 25, 26. Maximè μυστηριώδης eſt *trina* nominis *Jehovæ repetitio. Prima pericopa* per commode refertur ad *Patrem*, de quo *Paulus* ſcribit. *Epheſ.* i. 3. *Deus et* PATER—*qui* BENEDIXIT *nobis omni ſpirituali benedictione in Chriſto*, et cui *Chriſtus* ipſe dicit. *Joh.* xvii. 11. SERVA *eos per nomen tuum. Altera pericopa* ad CHRISTUM pertinet qui eſt *Lux mundi. Joh.* viii. 12. *Ultima pericopa*, cum notet applicationem gratiæ, et communicationem pacis ac gaudii, commode applicatur SPIRITUI SANCTO *per quem regnum Dei nobis eſt juſtitia et pax et gaudium. Rom.* xiv. 17. *Witſius de Sacerdotio Aaronis et Chriſti.*

the

the uſe, upon that particular day, and the trinal repetition of this ſacred name, as was ſuſpected by the Jews themſelves; this however is very evident, that the atonement was not compleated, nor the people entitled to the bleſſings to be conferred in conſequence of it, till the blood of the victim was preſented before the mercy ſeat. And herein is ſhadowed forth by a very appoſite emblem the full and ultimate accompliſhment of the reconciliation obtained by the great expiatory ſacrifice for the ſins of the whole world.

[l] *The Tabernacle*, ſay the Jews, *is a book of wiſdom to inſtruct men in the things above. The adytum*, or holy of holies, ſays [m] *Joſephus, which was inacceſſible to the prieſts, repreſented heaven where God dwelt.* And this interpretation is undoubtedly right. For, as the Apoſtle argues, [n] *the way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding: but our high-prieſt having*

[l] *Buxt. hiſt. arc.*
[m] *Joſ. ant.* l. iii. c. vi. 4.
[n] *Heb.* x, 20.

conſecrated

consecrated a new way for us the veil is rent, and heaven rendered accessible to all believers. [o] His sacrifice of himself was indeed offered in this earthly tabernacle; but his sacerdotal office was not fully discharged, till he had, by the presentation of his blood, testified that the atonement was actually made and [p] *the holy place reconciled*. Then were the [q] *everlasting doors* of heaven opened, and together with *the king of glory* did every faithful believer even then virtually enter.

But while we thus contend that heaven was rendered accessible at our Lord's ascension, let us not forget to ascribe this blessing in point of *efficient causality* to his

[o] Pontifex Judæorum et pontifex noster *Jesus Christus*; sanguis hircorum et vitulorum (eorum utique qui diebus *expiationis* mactabantur) et sanguis *Christi*; intimum adytum, et cælum supremum; ac denique pontificis in adytum illud ingressus per victimarum earum sanguinem, et ingressus *Christi* in cælum ipsum sui ipsius sanguinis vi; ut res adumbrantes et adumbratæ inter se mutuò conferuntur. *Outram.* l. i. c. 18.

[p] *Levit.* xvi, 20.

[q] *Ps.* xxiv. 7. Ὅτε ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη καὶ ἀνέβαινεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, κελεύονται οἱ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ταχθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄρχοντες ἀνοῖξαι τὰς πύλας τῶν οὐρανῶν—*Justin Mart.* speaking of our Saviour's *resurrection* and *ascension*. *Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 107.

oblation

oblation upon the croſs; of which his oblation in heaven was the proof, the evidence, the credential. He thereby (to ſpeak after the manner of men) produced his title-deed, and took poſſeſſion of the purchaſed inheritance. The price he paid for it was his blood. He was not only our *prieſt* but our *ſacrifice*. [r] *Chriſt loved us and gave himſelf for us an offering and a* ſacrifice *to God*. He was not only our *propitiator* but our *propitiation*. [s] *God loved us and ſent his ſon to be the* propitiation *for our ſins*. He was not only our *redeemer* but our *ranſom*. [t] *He gave himſelf* a ranſom *for all*. Now ſince by the Jewiſh law, from which theſe expreſſions are taken, the ſins of the offender were always transferred upon the *ſacrifice*; ſince the ſacrifice thus ſuffering inſtead of the offender was called the *propitiation*; ſince the conſideration paid to reſcue the firſt-born from death was called the *ranſom* — what can the Apoſtles mean, when they tell us that *Chriſt* was our *ſacrifice*, *propitiation*, *and*

[r] *Epheſ.* v. 2. [s] 1 *John* iv. 10.
[t] 1 *Tim.* ii. 6.

ranſom,

ranſom, but that *our* ſins *were transferred upon him*, that *he ſuffered in our ſtead*, and that *his ſuffering reſcued us from death?* Every text in holy writ, which ſpeaks of our redemption, confirms this doctrine. [u] *He redeemed us from the curſe being made a curſe for us*, [w] *he was made ſin for us*, not that he contracted any guilt, but having taken our ſins upon him he underwent the puniſhment of them, [x] which puniſhment the law ſtiled accurſed. We [y] *were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Chriſt:* for [z] *him hath God ſet forth*, (not, as the followers of *Socinus* impiouſly aſſert, merely as an example of holy life, and to confirm by his death the truth of his doctrine, but) *to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.*

The death of our Saviour was undoubtedly a full and authentic confirmation of the truth of the goſpel, and hence it is called by St. *Paul*, [a] *a good confeſſion:* but this end could not ſurely be the only one

[u] *Galat.* iii. 13.
[w] 2 *Cor.* v. 21.
[x] *Deuter.* xxi. 23.
[y] 1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19.
[z] *Rom.* iii. 25.
[a] 1 *Tim.* vi. 13.

deſigned;

deſigned; there muſt have been ſome more cogent reaſon to induce God to permit the ſon of his boſom to undergo a cruel and ignominious death. The truth of the goſpel was abundantly evinced by the miracles he performed, and the teſtimony of all the prophets ſince the world began. If theſe proofs were not ſufficient, [b] would not however a diſplay of his power by a miraculous deſcent from the croſs have been a more illuſtrious confirmation, than ſubmitting to the torments and ſhame of puniſhment? If *Chriſt* was only ſet forth as an example, what need was there of his death? was not his doctrine a ſufficient rule of life? was not the whole tenor of his life inſtructive and exemplary, a perfect pattern of patience, meekneſs, courage, charity, purity, holineſs, and every virtue that conſtitutes innocence? The blood of martyrs ſhed in the cauſe of religion bore teſtimony to the truth, and they have both in their lives and death ſet us eminent examples of con-

[b] *If he be the king of Iſrael*, ſaid the chief prieſts with the ſcribes and elders, *let him now come down from the croſs, and we will believe him.* *Matth.* xxvii. 41, 42.

ſtancy,

ſtancy, humility, and other chriſtian virtues. Yet in what part of ſcripture are we taught that their blood was ſhed for us, or that we ſhould build our faith upon them? St. *Paul* reprobates the idea with the higheſt indignation. [c] *Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?* [d] *who then is Paul and who is Apollos but miniſters? for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.*

The death of our bleſſed Saviour, taken abſtractedly from every other conſideration, does not ſeem to have any thing in it peculiar or extraordinary: many holy men had before him, many holy men have ſince, ſuffered as cruel and bloody a death. If there was therefore no myſtery in his death and paſſion, why are they ſo celebrated and magnified in the holy ſcriptures? If there was no ſingular and ſpecific virtue in his blood, why is there ſuch an emphaſis laid upon it throughout the whole word of God? Surely there muſt

[c] 1 *Cor.* i. 13. [d] 1 *Cor.* iii. 5, 11.

have

have been ſomething peculiar in the [e] nature and deſign of his ſufferings, which diſtinguiſhed them from all other ſufferings; ſome ſecret quality in his blood, to occaſion ſuch peculiar notice, ſuch particular marks and characters to accompany conſtantly the mention and deſcription of it. Why did our Saviour himſelf with ſo much ſolemnity inſtitute and recommend the ſacrament, as a memorial of his body broken and blood ſhed? Why are there promiſes of ſuch extraordinary bleſſings annexed to the worthy participation of the *ſacramental*, if there was no extraordinary virtue, no important myſtery in the *real* fleſh and blood, whereof the one was broken, the other ſhed upon the croſs?

The ſcriptures explain this myſtery; there we are taught that his ſufferings were *vicarious*, his blood *piacular*; [f] *he waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood*, [g] *he*

[e] Very expreſſive is that ejaculation in the *greek* liturgies διὰ τῶν ἀγνώσων σου παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Χριστέ: *By thy* unknown *ſufferings, O Chriſt, have mercy upon us.*

[f] *Revel.* i. 5. [g] *Ibid.* v. 9.

redeemed

redeemed us to God by his blood: [h] *he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions; he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes are we healed; all we like ſheep had gone aſtray, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.* Of theſe iniquities his death was piacular; for them he underwent the accumulated wrath, and ſatisfied the infinite juſtice of God. Hence he is ſaid [i] *his own ſelf to have born our ſins in his own body on the tree,* [k] *to have given himſelf for our ſins,* [l] *to have died for our ſins.* And, to make us more eaſily apprehend this myſtery, he is compared to the *propitiatory ſacrifices* under the law, which were always underſtood [m] *to make atonement* for the ſins of him who offered them. Now this virtue of theirs reaſon and the nature of things muſt teach us could only be ſymbolical: for, as St. *Paul* juſtly argues, [n] *it is not poſſible that the blood of bulls and*

[h] *Iſ.* liii. 5.
[i] 1 *Pet.* ii. 24.
[k] *Galat.* i. 4.
[l] 1 *Cor.* xv. 3.
[m] *Levit.* i. 4.
[n] *Heb.* x. 4. Even our learned *Spencer* himſelf, who is ſo ſtrenuous an advocate for the *human inſtitution* of ſacrifices, is forced to acknowledge that *humanæ menti, naturæ divinæ*

of goats could take away ſins. If this is true, and it is moſt evidently ſo, how could reaſon prompt man to make uſe of a method for the expiation of his ſins, which that very reaſon muſt aſſure him was of itſelf inadequate to the effect? But the effect itſelf was likewiſe ſymbolical. The deliverance they effected was only from *temporal* death; and the privileges they obtained were merely *ceremonial*, the right of joining in the public worſhip and approaching the ſanctuary. But, as they had a reſpect to the ſacrifice of *Chriſt* their antitype and ſubſtance, they from that relation acquired a degree of ſuperior excellence: the legal purity, the admiſſion to

divinæ ſcientiâ vel leviter imbutæ, manifeſtum eſt ſacrificio per ſe ſpectato nihil ineſſe, unde ullo apud Deum in pretio eſſe poſſet. Nothing, I think, can be plainer than that God appointed *Animals* to be offered as figures and repreſentations of the ſacrifice of the Meſſiah, whoſe *blood* was to atone for the ſins of the whole world. And hence the reaſon why *unto Cain and his offering God had not reſpect. Geneſ.* iv. 5. His *offering* was of the fruit of the ground, *bloodleſs*; and therefore could not be accepted: for *without blood there can be no redemption, Heb.* ix. 22. Neither therefore could *Cain* himſelf be accepted; for not having *faith* in the promiſes of God he brought a different offering from that which he had appointed; an offering which, having no typical relation to the one great offering, could not entitle him to the benefits annexed to thoſe only that had that relation.

the holy place, and deliverance from temporal death, became repreſentatives of the *ſpiritual* purity, the acceſs unto God, and the title to *eternal* life purchaſed for us by the precious blood of *Chriſt*. [a] *For if the blood of bulls and of goats—ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh, how much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt purge the conſcience?*

Though I have already taken up ſo much of your time, I muſt ſtill beg your patience and attention to an inference or two; whoſe great importance, and cloſe connection with the doctrine I have endeavoured to confirm, will not ſuffer me entirely to neglect and paſs them over in ſilence.

It is evident, from moſt of the paſſages which I have cited, that the *redemption* wrought by the blood of *Chriſt* is *univerſal*. It is the conſtant and uniform language of ſcripture; and yet it cannot be true if, according to the *Socinians*, *Chriſt* was ſet forth only as a teacher of truth

[a] *Heb.* ix. 13, 14.

and

and an example of holineſs; for then he could have no retroſpect to paſt generations; that truth could be profeſſed, and that example followed, by thoſe only to whom they were propoſed. But, what comfort could our firſt parents reap from a promiſe of a redeemer, if they were to have no benefit from the redemption? The promiſe was univerſal, and therefore they to whom it was made muſt certainly be included in it. Every ſubſequent covenant eſtabliſhed with the patriarchs was a renewal of it: And hence St. *Paul* ſays that [p] *God preached the goſpel to Abraham, ſaying, In thy ſeed ſhall all nations be bleſſed*; and it was faith in this promiſe that [q] *was counted unto him for righteouſneſs:* the ſame faith made [r] *Moſes eſteem the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt*; and this faith entitled him, and every true believer, to *the recompence of the reward.* Either ſacrifices were ſufficient to ſatisfy the juſtice of God, or they were not: if they were ſufficient, there needed

[p] *Galat.* iii. 8. [q] *Rom.* iv. 3.
[r] *Heb.* xi. 26.

no redeemer; if they were not, the efficacy of *his* blood muſt be reflected back upon thoſe who offered them. And upon this is founded the Apoſtle's argument, that if *Chriſt*'s once offering himſelf had not been effectual [s] *he muſt often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world.* But [t] *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.* The efficacy of his ſacrifice extends through all ages from the beginning to the end of the world.

As the benefits of *Chriſt*'s paſſion are univerſal with regard to *time*, ſo are they likewiſe with regard to *perſons*. He died for all without exception, without diſtinction. The words made uſe of in ſcripture are plain, familiar, and explicit, teaching us that all mankind univerſally are the ſubject of redemption. [u] *Chriſt gave him-*

[s] *Heb.* ix. 26. [t] *Heb.* xiii. 8.

[u] *Tim.* ii. 4. 6. It is obſervable that the common Syriac and Dr. *Ridley*'s old MS. ſeem both of them to have read ὑπὲρ παντὸς inſtead of πάντων, *he gave himſelf a ranſom for* every individual *man.* The Verſion, ſays the Doctor, may rather be a proof of a Syriac Idiom than a various reading in the original; however it proves their ſenſe of the paſſage that *the ranſom was for every individual, and not for ſome only of every kind.*

ſelf

ſelf a ranſom for all; he will have all men to be ſaved; [w] *he is the lamb of God that taketh away the ſins of the world,* [x] *the propitiation for the ſins of the* whole *world.* As thoſe who are redeemed are *collectively* expreſſed by the words *all, the world,* and *the whole world,* ſo likewiſe are they *diſtributively.* [y] *The Lord is not willing that* any *ſhould periſh;* [z] *he taſted death ὑπὲρ παντὸς for* every individual *man.* The univerſality of the redemption is plainly taught in the parallel, which the Apoſtle draws between the effects of *Adam*'s *diſobedience* and thoſe of *the obedience of Chriſt.* [a] *As by the offence of one judgement came upon* all men *to condemnation, ſo by the righteouſneſs of one the free gift came upon* all men *unto juſtification of life:* [b] *As in Adam* all *die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall* all *be made alive.* [c] The whole Chriſ-

[w] *John* i. 29. [x] 1 *John* ii. 2.
[y] 2 *Pet.* iii. 9. [z] *Heb.* ii. 9.
[a] *Rom.* v. 18. [b] 1 *Cor.* xv. 22.

[c] Perſuaſio noſtra non eſt ex eo qui vocavit nos, ſed ex nobis qui conſentimus vocanti: aliud quippe dei opus, aliud hominum; dei opus eſt vocare, hominum credere vel non credere.—Accuſat enim quare non obediverint veritati, oſtendens in eorum arbitrio poſitum obedire vel non obedire. *Hier. in Galat.* v. 8. In this he ſpeaks the ſenſe of all the ancients till St. *Auſtin*'s time. *Whitby.* This point is very fully and ably treated by the late learned Dr. *Ridley*

tian church for the firſt four hundred years maintained this comfortable truth; all the Chriſtian writers during that period uniformly agree in this doctrine; aſcribing the condemnation of men, not to any *partial purpoſe or irreſpective decree* of God but to their own free choice, not to *his denial* of grace but to *their neglect* of it when proffered. St. *Auſtin* firſt broached the contrary doctrine of *election and reprobation*, falling (it is to be hoped inadvertently) in the warmth of a diſpute againſt *Pelagius*, whoſe tenets were ſubverſive of *univerſal*, into the oppoſite extreme of *particular* and *irreſiſtible* grace. The credit however which he gained in this controverſy was ſo great, that his writings became the foundation on which the latin fathers and ſchoolmen erected their theology; they were preſcribed by the authority of the Popes as a rule never to be ſwerved from in all ſchools and univerſities. Hence this rigid doctrine became ſo rooted in the church that even the firſt reformers,

Ridley in his Sermons at Lady Moyer's lectures, to which I beg leave to refer the reader.

though

though in general men of learning, piety, and judgement yet (being according to the cuſtom of the times particularly verſed in his writings, and impreſſed with an invincible notion of his ſuperior excellence) blindly profeſſed, and ſtrenuouſly maintained it, without examining its beginning or progreſs. But when the ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures and the more ancient fathers came into repute and uſe, the authority of St. *Auſtin* ([d] which in truth was challenged in ſupport of doctrines much more extravagant than thoſe which he really taught) gave way to the uniform opinion of the catholic church in early ages, to the reaſon of man, to the word of God. They would in all probability have died had it not been for their ſubſerviency to the deſigns of artful ſectaries, who have of late years not only embraced but [e] im-

[d] There are ſeveral paſſages in his writings, which give room to ſuppoſe that his real opinion is not to be gathered from thoſe unguarded expreſſions, leaning too much to *Manichæiſm*, into which his zeal hurried him in his diſpute with *Pelagius*. Such is the following. *Vult Deus omnes homines ſalvos fieri, et in agnitionem veritatis venire: non ſic tamen, ut eis adimat liberum arbitrium, quo vel benè vel malè utentes juſtiſſime judicentur. Aug. ad Marc. de ſpir. et lit.* c. 33.

[e] "Though all the ſins that ever were committed in the "whole

proved upon them, in ſpite of their anti-ſcriptural principle, and the horrid conſequences with which they are juſtly chargeable. I tremble to mention the diſtinction made by *Thomas Aquinas*, and eſpouſed by *Calvin* and his followers, of an *hidden* and *revealed* will of God contrary to each other. It reflects upon the veracity and goodneſs of God; it robs him of all his moral attributes, which endear him to his rational creatures; it makes his dealings with men fraudulent and illuſive, in inviting them to a ſalvation which was never deſigned for them; in ſetting forth unto them a redeemer, in whom they really have no intereſt nor concern; in offering terms of reconciliation, which he is determined never to grant; in publiſhing pardon to all true penitents and believers, when he has ſecretly reſolved that they ſhall not truly repent and believe, or if they do, yet they ſhall not partake of the pardon promiſed.

" whole world were centered in one ſoul, it would be no " bar to its ſalvation." *Whitfield* and *Cummins*, as quoted by Dr. *Ridley*.

But

But let us turn away from this ſhocking ſcene though to one perhaps not much leſs ſhocking.

We have ſeen, from many plain and expreſs texts of ſcripture, that *Chriſt* died in our ſtead, and that by his death he made an atonement and ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God for the ſins of the whole world. Yet a neighbouring church, which inſolently claims the title of catholic, in fact rejects that doctrine; it relies not on the ſufferings or merits of our bleſſed redeemer, from which the great pillars of that church tell us there comes no acceſſion of dignity to the works of juſt men, which [f] *do of themſelves by a value of condignity merit eternal life.* When theſe good works are wanting ſinners have recourſe not to the ſatisfaction of *Chriſt* but of *Saints*, with which they are abundantly ſupplied out of a treaſure pretended to be left to that church; to [g] *indulgences* and

[f] *Bellarm.* de juſtific. l. v. c. 7.

[g] The novelty of *indulgences* and *pardons*, &c. is freely confeſſed by many *Romiſh* writers. Inter omnes res, de quibus in hoc

pardons, which the Pope uſurps the power upon being paid properly of diſtributing profuſely. By theſe and various other methods of human inſtitution do they ſeek for ſalvation; "[h] methods derogatory "from the merits of our Saviour, contra- "dictory to common ſenſe as well as "ſcripture, which neither any Apoſtles "ever taught, nor any fathers of the "church ever heard of."

We are told by St. *Paul* that *Chriſt, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins*, for ever *ſat down at the right hand of God*, and that *where there is remiſſion for ſins there is no more offering for ſin:* yet the church of Rome ſacrilegiouſly preſumes to bring *Chriſt* down every day from the right hand of God, to *crucify afreſh the*

hoc opere diſputamus, nulla eſt quam minus aperte S. literæ prodiderunt et de qua minus vetuſti ſcriptores dixerint; neque tamen hâc occaſione contemnendæ ſunt——nam de *tranſubſtantione panis in corpus Chriſti* rara eſt in antiquis ſcriptoribus mentio—de *purgatorio* fere nulla.—Quid ergo mirum ſi ad hunc modum contigerit de *indulgentiis* ut apud priſcos nulla ſit de eis mentio? *Alphonſ. Caſtro de hær.* l. 8. *Tit. de Indulgentiis.*

[h] *Brevint on the Maſs.*

Lord

Lord of glory; "[i] changing *his inſtitution* "*of a ſacrament* into *a ſacrifice of their own*, "the *ſacramental communication* of the body "and blood of *Chriſt to man* into a proper "and *real offering* of the ſame body and "blood *to God*;" and this the Council of Trent declares to be[k] *a true and proper ſacrifice really propitiatory for the ſins, puniſhments, ſatisfactions, and other neceſſities, both of the living and the dead.*

But we, my brethren, thanks be to God, have not ſo learned *Chriſt*. We acknowledge with gratitude that[l] *the offering of Chriſt once made is a perfect redemption, propitiation, and ſatisfaction for all the ſins of the whole world*, and that *there is none other ſatisfaction for ſin but that alone:* We believe that the blood ſhed in this ſacrifice is the ſeal of the new covenant, by which God is pleaſed through the merits of his beloved ſon to remit our

[i] *Brevint on the Maſs.*

[k] *Seſſ.* xxii. *ch.* 2. There are no leſs than nine canons relating to the maſs, all of them containing anti-ſcriptural doctrine; yet each of them pronounces a curſe againſt thoſe that diſbelieve it.

[l] *Article* 31ſt.

ſins,

ſins, and receive all mankind without reſpect of perſons into grace and favour; that to them, who truly and ſincerely endeavour to fulfil the terms of the covenant, *Chriſt* will be [m] *made wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption*; their minds will be enlightened, their ſins forgiven; the means of grace will be powerfully imparted to them, and their obedience finally crowned with eternal life. —And this God will be pleaſed to perform, not through any merits of our own, but through the merits and ſatisfaction of his Son our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*.

[m] 1 *Cor.* i. 30.

SERMON V.

JOHN i. 1, 2, 3.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life (for the life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen it, and bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you that eternal life which was with the father and was manifeſted unto us.) That which we have ſeen and heard declare we unto you.

THE redemption of mankind is ſo wonderful in itſelf and ſo important in its conſequences, that the moſt minute circumſtance relating to it is highly deſerving

ſerving our moſt ſerious and attentive conſideration: how much more then are we bound by indiſpenſible duty to endeavour at attaining a right notion of thoſe more material truths, which conſtitute its very eſſence and ſubſtance? With this view, (after having in the foregoing diſcourſes to to the beſt of my abilities vindicated the firſt principles of religion in general, and the truth of the Chriſtian religion in particular,) I proceeded to explain that ſtate of perdition from which we were redeemed, and the nature, benefits, and univerſality of that redemption; reſcuing conſtantly what has appeared to me to be the truth, as delivered by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, from the hand of the enemy. With the ſame view I propoſe, God willing, to employ the preſent diſcourſe in conſidering from his word, contained in the ſcriptures, the nature of that bleſſed perſon by whom our redemption was effected; and for that purpoſe have choſen theſe words of St. *John*; becauſe they evidently contain and aſſert two fundamental doctrines of a true Chriſtian's belief on this ſublime and important ſubject, the

the *humanity* and *divinity* of *Chriſt*. His *humanity* is plainly aſſerted in theſe words *—that which we have heard—which we have ſeen with our eyes—which we have looked upon and our hands have handled—the life was manifeſted*—expreſſions which, being thus by way of confirmation crouded upon each other and appealing to ſeveral of the ſenſes, give us the fulleſt aſſurance of the certainty and reality of *Chriſt*'s incarnation and manifeſtation in the fleſh. And that this perſon, who thus aſſumed human nature, had a diſtinct, *pre-exiſtent*, and more excellent being the Apoſtle teaches us by ſaying that he *was from the beginning*, by calling him *the word of life —the life—that eternal life which was with the father*.

The words themſelves without any comment point out the occaſion on which they were written, and the hereſies they were meant to oppoſe. They are chiefly directed againſt the [a] firſt hereſy that aroſe

[a] Apoſtolis adhuc in ſæculo ſuperſtitibus, adhuc apud Judæam *Chriſti* ſanguine recenti, *phantaſma* Domini corpus aſſerebatur. *Hieron. adv. Lucif.* c. 8.

in

in the church; a ſtrange, abſurd, and blaſphemous doctrine taught by *Simon Magus* and his [b] followers—that *Jeſus Chriſt* did not *really* come in the fleſh, but that his incarnation was only in appearance, *putativè* as the latin fathers called it, or as the greeks ἐν δοκήσει and ἐν φανλασίᾳ; whence we often read of them under the names of *docetæ* and *phantaſiaſtæ*. [c] As they denied the *reality* of our Saviour's human body, ſo they conſequently held all his actions and ſufferings to have been equally ideal;

[b] They were called *gnoſtics* from the greek word γνῶσις; which in general ſignifies *knowledge*, but in the language of ſcripture is often uſed for a particular gift vouchſafed in the infancy of the church, the *knowledge of myſteries*: which gift theſe heretics pretending to have in a more eſpecial manner aſſumed to themſelves the name of γνωστικοὶ *gnoſtics*, i. e. *the men of knowledge*, as if they had been the only perſons that underſtood and could expound the myſteries of the Chriſtian faith. Thus the firſt temptation which *Satan* threw in the way of man in the ſtate of *grace*, was the very ſame to which he had ſo eaſily yielded in the ſtate of *nature*.

[c] Thus *Tertullian* ſpeaking of one *Cerdon* a ring-leader among theſe heretics. Hunc (*Chriſtum*) in ſubſtantiâ carnis negat, in *phantaſmate* ſolo fuiſſe pronuntiat: nec omninò paſſum, ſed *quaſi* paſſum; nec ex virgine natum, ſed *omnino nec natum*. *de præſc. hæret.* c. 51. *Baſilides* (as we are told by *Philaſtrius* in his book *de hæreſ.*) added this peculiarity to the other abſurdities, that *Simon of Cyrene ſuffered* inſtead of our *Saviour*, becauſe it is ſaid in ſcripture *that he bore his croſs*.

he

he was not *really* born of the Virgin *Mary*, neither did he *really* eat, drink, or ſleep; he was not *really* crucified, neither did he *really* die or riſe again: All theſe things were done only *in appearance*, *in a phantaſm*, or *viſion*.

It was, I am perſuaded, with reference to this hereſy that St. *John* began his firſt general epiſtle in the words of my text; it was with a particular view to it that he wrote both this and his ſecond epiſtle; as is, I think, clear from ſeveral paſſages which I cannot conceive how the wit of man could detort to another meaning. Such is this in the fourth chapter—[d] *every ſpirit which confeſſeth that* Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh *is of God*; *and every ſpirit which confeſſeth not that* Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh *is not of God: and this is that ſpirit of* Anti-Chriſt *whereof ye have heard that it ſhould come:* and this likewiſe in the ſecond epiſtle—[e] *many deceivers are gone out into the world who confeſs not that*

[d] V. 2, 3. [e] V. 7.

Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh. [f] *This is a deceiver and* an Anti-Chriſt. It is, I conceive, with a view to this hereſy that our Apoſtle in his goſpel having obſerved that [g] *when the ſoldiers ſaw that Chriſt was dead they brake not his legs, but* that *one of the ſoldiers with a ſpear pierced his ſide and forthwith came thereout blood and water*— having, I ſay, obſerved this he adds—*he that ſaw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he ſaith true that ye might believe.* But what were they to believe? what doctrine did this fact prove, that the Apoſtle takes ſo much care to teſtify and aſcertain it? It could be an evidence of nothing elſe but that *Chriſt* had a *true and real* human body, and was *truly and really* dead, againſt the heretics of thoſe times. To this teſtimony of *water and blood* our Apoſtle in his firſt epiſtle adds that of the *ſpirit*, the Holy Ghoſt, who at the baptiſm of *Chriſt* declar-

[f] Ὡς μὴ τῶν ὁμολογούντων τὸν χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα Ἀντιχρίστων ὑπερεχόντων. *As if he had ſaid thoſe that confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh are Antichriſts. Epiph.* ſpeaking of this hereſy, *hær.* xxvi. 15.

[g] *John* xviii. 34, 35, 36.

ed

ed him to be the *ſon of God*; *for*, ſays he, *the ſpirit is truth*; and therefore could not give his atteſtation an illuſive ſcenical repreſentation, [h] as theſe heretics affirmed his baptiſm in particular to have been.

I am perſuaded that by carrying this in our minds we ſhall be able to underſtand, and feel the force and propriety of, many places in ſcripture which without ſuch a reference appear either obſcure or of no great importance; it will certainly furniſh us with a very pertinent anſwer to that otherwiſe difficult queſtion, ſo often and ſo ſtrongly urged by the unitarians [i]; "why St. *John* (who on account of his

[h] Some of them held that *Jeſus* and *Chriſt* were two different perſons: that *Jeſus* was born like other men from *Joſeph* and *Mary*; but that at his baptiſm *Chriſt* deſcended into him in the ſhape of a dove, and deſerted him again before his paſſion, leaving him to be crucified, &c. See *Irenæus* l. i. c. 25, &c. To this our Apoſtle alludes, c. ii. v. 22. *Who is a liar but he that denieth that* Jeſus is the Chriſt? and c. v. ver. 1; &c.

[i] It is obſervable, ſays Dr. *Whitby* in his preface to this goſpel, that whereas *Crellius* in his book *de uno deo patre*, *Sect.* ii. reckons up 36 arguments againſt the divinity of *Chriſt*, and *Woltzogenius* in his *præparatio ad utilem lectionem librorum* N. T. reckons up 60 againſt it, one half of them are taken from ſome paſſages of this goſpel.

" ſublime deſcription of the divine na-
" ture and eternity of the *word* obtained
" the name of *the divine*) ſhould not-
" withſtanding afford more arguments
" for his humanity than all the other
" Evangeliſts?" When the other Evangeliſts wrote, the faith had not been oppugned; but St. *John*, who lived a long while after them, had two different and contradictory opinions to contend with. Thoſe therefore who deny the *divinity* of our Saviour very artfully paſs over the arguments which he urges againſt their predeceſſors, and eagerly preſs into their ſervice all the texts which, in oppoſition to the other hereſy, reſpect his *human nature* and that inferiority, which in the oeconomy of our redemption he was pleaſed to take upon him. His goſpel was written when *gnoſticiſm* was at its height, and therefore I preſume intended to confute that as well as the hereſy of *Cerinthus* and *Ebion*, who ran in the oppoſite extreme. Againſt theſe he firſt aſſerts the *divinity* of our Saviour, ſaying that [k] *in*

[k] *John* i. 1.

the

the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God; and then maintains his *humanity* againſt the other heretics, ſubjoining, [l] *the word was made fleſh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory*; appealing to the ſenſes, as he does in my text, for the certainty and reality of his incarnation.

This denial of Chriſt's real appearance in the fleſh, however ridiculous it appears to us, prevailed much and ſadly afflicted the church for the firſt two hundred years. It is taken notice of by [m] *Ignatius* biſhop of *Antioch*, and cotemporary with our Apoſtle, who tells us that ſome abſented themſelves on that account from public prayers and the euchariſt: and it might, if it were neceſſary, be purſued through

[l] *John* i. 14. *Irenæus* after quoting thoſe paſſages out of our Apoſtle's *Epiſtles* which I have cited above, adds—Hæc autem ſimilia ſunt illi quod in *Evangelio* dictum eſt, quoniam *Verbum caro factum eſt et habitavit in nobis*. *Iren.* l. iii. c. 18.

[m] Τινὲς ἄθεοι ὄντες, τυτέστιν ἄπιστοι, λέγουσιν τὸ δοκεῖν πεπονθέναι αὐτὸν. *Ignat. ad Trall.* et *ad Smyrn.*

Εὐχαριστίας καὶ προσευχῆς ἀπέχονται διὰ τὸ μὴ ὁμολογεῖν τὴν εὐχαριστίαν σάρκα εἶναι τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθοῦσαν. *Ignat. ad Smyrn.*

the writings of all the other fathers to even beyond the times of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*; the latter of whom wrote a treatiſe profeſſedly againſt it, entitled "*De "Carne Chriſti:*" in which he makes uſe of this remarkable argument. —[n] *Thoſe*, ſays he, *who think that Chriſt's incarnation was only in appearance deſtroy the reſurrection of the fleſh. If his human nature is not allowed, how can his death be aſſerted? If his death is not allowed, neither can his reſurrection be maintained. But if the reſurrection of Chriſt is overthrown, ours falls of courſe.* This argument, I ſay, is remarkable; becauſe it ſhews how intimately connected this article of *Chriſt's humanity* is with the hope of a Chriſtian; and becauſe it is evidently the ſame which St. *Paul* makes uſe of in his *fifteenth* chapter of the *firſt* epiſtle to the *Corinthians:* and is therefore a ſtrong preſumption that the Apoſtle there defends the reſurrection of

[n] Qui carnem Chriſti putativam putant reſurrectionem carnis infringunt. Si Caro ejus negatur, quomodo mors ejus aſſeveratur? Negatâ vero morte, nec de reſurrectione conſtabit. Proinde reſurrectione Chriſti infirmatâ etiam noſtra ſubverſa eſt. To the ſame purpoſe St. *Cyril*, εἰ φάντασμα ἦν ἡ ἐνανθρώπησις φάντασμα καὶ ἡ σωτηρία. *Cat.* iv. 6.

the

the body againſt the ſame heretics; and for the ſame reaſon he joins in another place *Chriſt's incarnation and reſurrection*, as truths depending upon each other; charging *Timothy* to preach and inculcate them—° *remember that Jeſus Chriſt of the ſeed of David was raiſed from the dead.*

Whilſt the miracles of our Saviour, and more particularly his reſurrection, were freſh in the memory of men; there could be, there was no doubt in the church about his *divinity:* of this period therefore the enemy of mankind took advantage by tempting them to deny his *humanity*, and the infirmities and ſufferings conſequent, as inconſiſtent with the excellence of his perſon: but, when the ſenſe of them began to wear out of men's minds, he boldly ventured one ſtep further and tempted them to deny his *divinity*. By the *firſt* hereſy his ſacrifice was entirely exploded; by the *ſecond* rendered of no effect. The firſt has long ago been entirely forgotten; but the ſecond having come down even to our times under different modifications, it

° 2 *Tim.* ii. 8.

cannot be an uſeleſs or diſagreeable employment to enquire into the proofs contained in the evangelical and apoſtolical writings of that *divinity*, which our church maintains againſt all *unitarians* whatſoever.

In order to do this in as clear and diſtinct a manner as I can, I ſhall proceed gradually; and conſider,

Firſt, our Saviour's *pre-exiſtence in general.*

Secondly, his *temporal*,

And thirdly, his *eternal pre-exiſtence.*

As the *firſt* particular is included in both the others, I need not labour for arguments to prove it. I ſhall therefore content myſelf with quoting a few plain paſſages, which have a *general* reference to this doctrine. Thus from *Chriſt's* ſaying to his diſciples, [p] *as my father has ſent me ſo ſend I you*, we may fairly infer that he, as well as the Apoſtles, had a being before he had his miſſion. When he tells the

[p] *John* XX. 21.

Jews,

Jews, [q] *I know whence I came*, he evidently ſpeaks of ſome place and ſtate of life prior to that into which he came: What this place was he tells them ſoon after.—[r] *I proceeded forth and came from God.* When he ſaid that [s] *he came down from heaven*, not only the *Jews* underſtood him as ſpeaking of a *real deſcent*, *Is not this Jeſus the ſon of Joſeph, whoſe father and mother we know? How is it then that he ſaith, I came down from heaven?* but he himſelf aſcertains that meaning by urging to them, *What and if you ſhall ſee the ſon of man aſcend up where he was before?* In which paſſage he plainly aſſerts, that "his aſcen- "ſion into heaven would be but a tranſ- "lation of the human nature thither "where, according to a more excellent "nature, he did abide before his incar- "nation."

From the frequent application of the term *coming* to our bleſſed Saviour, it has been imagined, and not without reaſon, that he is emphatically ſtiled the ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *he that is coming, he that cometh.* When

[q] *John* viii. 14.
[r] *John* viii. 42.
[s] *John* vi. 38. 42. 62.

John's

John's disciples enquired of him if he was the *Messiah*; [t] *they said unto him art thou the* ὁ ἐρχόμενος. [u] *The multitude cried, Hosannah to the son of David; Blessed be the* ὁ ἐρχόμενος. [w] *Verily I say unto you, you shall not see me, until the time when you shall say, Blessed be the* ὁ ἐρχόμενος. The *Messiah* had been so stiled before by the prophet [x] *Habakkuc* in a passage alluded to by St. *Paul*, *Yet a little while and* the ὁ ἐρχόμενος, he that is coming *will come*.

I shall quote but one passage out of the epistles relating to Christ's pre-existence in general; but that one is so full and clear that though it stood alone it would be sufficient to establish the doctrine. St. *Paul* recommends our Saviour to the *Philippians* as a pattern of humility, [y] *who being in the form of God—took upon him the form of a servant*. Whatever is the precise meaning of this passage, thus much is undeniable; that there is a contrast, in which lies the whole force of the example

[t] *Matth.* xi. 3.
[u] *Matth.* xxi. 9.
[w] *Luke* xiii. 35.
[x] *Habak.* ii. 3. *Heb.* x. 37.
[y] *Philip.* ii. 6, 7.

proposed,

propoſed, between that ſtate in which *Chriſt* was *before* and that in which he was *after* he had taken upon him our nature; and conſequently that he had a being before he was born of the virgin *Mary*. Accordingly we read in the new teſtament of ſeveral *particular* periods of time in which he did pre-exiſt.

The *firſt* period of Chriſt's *temporal pre-exiſtence* mentioned in the new teſtament is the time of *David*, about a thouſand years before he was born. *Jeſus* aſked the Phariſees, [z] *what think ye of Chriſt? whoſe ſon is he? they ſay unto him, the ſon of David; he ſaith unto them, how then doth David in ſpirit call him Lord; ſaying, the Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy foot-ſtool? If David call him Lord, how is he his ſon? And no man was able to anſwer him a word.* It is plain from hence that the perſon whom *David* calls *Lord* was then in being; and that he was the *Meſſiah*,

[z] *Matth.* xxii. 42, &c.

contrary

contrary to the artifice of later Jews [a] who apply this pſalm to *Ezechias*, is aſſerted by our Saviour and allowed by the Phariſees themſelves.

The next period in which we read of the pre-exiſtence of *Chriſt* carries us about four hundred years higher. For St. *Paul*, laying before the *Corinthians* the ſpecial favours and advantages vouchſafed to the Jews during their abode in the wilderneſs, warns them not to truſt too much upon the like ſpiritual privileges, nor to commit thoſe ſins which were the cauſe of their ruin, and particularly [b] *not to tempt* Chriſt *as ſome of them alſo tempted him*.

[c] It was the univerſal belief not only of the primitive Chriſtians, but likewiſe the ancient Jews, that it was the *Meſſiah* who conducted the *Iſraelites* by the pillar of cloud and of fire. [d] *Behold*, ſays God, *I*

[a] See *Juſtin Martyr*'s dialogue againſt *Trypho*, p. 251. *Ed. Jebb.* and likewiſe *Tertullian adv. Mar.* l. v. c. 9.

[b] 1 *Cor.* x. 9.

[c] See Dr. *Allix in his judgment of the Jewiſh church*, c. 13, 14, 15. and Mr. *Lowth* on *Iſaiah* lxiii. 9.

[d] *Exod.* xxiii. 20, 21.

ſend

ſend an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared; beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your tranſgreſſions, for my name is in him. He is here indeed called *an Angel*; but it is at the ſame time declared that he had power to pardon tranſgreſſions, and that in him was the name of God. And accordingly the incommunicable name *Jehovah* is given to him.—[e] *Jehovah went before the people in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night*; and [f] *Jehovah looked unto the hoſt of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and the cloud.* It could not therefore be a created Angel, for which of them has power to pardon ſins? in which of them is the name of God? It was [g] *the Angel of the covenant, the* [h] *Angel of God's preſence*; an Angel by office not nature: *the Captain of the Lord's hoſt*; which title when *Joſhua* heard [i] *he fell on his face and did worſhip, and ſaid unto him, what ſaith my Lord unto his ſervant?* It was he who

[e] *Exod.* xiii. 21.
[f] *Exod.* xiv. 24.
[g] *Mal.* iii. 1.
[h] *If.* lxiii. 9.
[i] *Joſh.* v. 14.

took

took up his reſidence over the ark, whoſe [k] *glory filled the tabernacle* which *Moſes* built according to his promiſe and prediction in that divinely-inſpired ſong of praiſe and thankſgiving to God for his wonderful deliverance of his people.—[l] *The Lord is my ſtrength and my ſalvation; he is my God and I ſhall prepare him an habitation.* Of this glorious reſidence the bleſſing conferred by *Noah* upon *Shem* was undoubtedly prophetical.—[m] *God ſhall dwell in the tabernacles of Shem*; and its further application to our bleſſed Saviour is confirmed by St. *John* when, in manifeſt alluſion to this habitation, and the glory by which the Lord manifeſted his preſence, he ſays [n] *the Word was made fleſh and* ἐσκήνωσε dwelt in a tabernacle *among us, and we beheld his* glory, *the* glory *of the only begotten ſon of the father.*

The *next period* in which the ſcriptures of the new teſtament take notice of the pre-exiſtence of *Chriſt* is indefinite; but

[k] *Exod.* xl. 35.
[l] *Exod.* xv. 2.
[m] *Geneſ.* ix. 27.
[n] *John* i. 14.

the

the antiquity of it is ſo far aſcertained that it is expreſsly aſſerted to have been *before Abraham.* ° *Your Father Abraham,* ſays *Chriſt* to the Jews, *rejoiced to ſee my day, and he ſaw it and was glad: then ſaid the Jews, thou art not yet fifty years old and haſt thou ſeen Abraham? Jeſus ſaid unto them, verily, verily, I ſay unto you,* before *Abraham* was I am. It is amazing what pains the enemies of this doctrine have taken to elude and perplex this moſt clear and plain paſſage. Some interpret it thus —*Before Abraham is made,* what his name ſignifies, *a father of many nations,* I am the Meſſiah. Others take the words πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ. γενέσθαι in their natural meaning; but to the others they add a ſtrange qualification, *before Abraham was born, I was in God's foreknowledge and decree.* Every one of *Chriſt's* hearers was before *Abraham* in the ſame ſenſe. Why then ſhould they be ſo exaſperated as to *take up ſtones to caſt at him?* Doubtleſs becauſe they underſtood his words in their literal and obvious ſenſe, as a direct anſwer to

° *John* viii. 56, 57, 58.

their

their queſtion which reſpected only actual exiſtence. In this reſpect our Saviour aſſerting a priority, appeared to them to aſſert in fact an eternal exiſtence; and for that reaſon they attempted to inflict upon him [p] the puniſhment which the law decreed againſt blaſphemy. I know that the expreſſions (*Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day and he ſaw it*) are generally underſtood in a metaphorical and religious ſenſe, *he ſaw it with the eye of faith as a thing to be accompliſhed in future ages*. I verily believe that *Abraham* did ſee the day of *Chriſt* with the eye of faith; but I do not take that to be our Saviour's meaning in this place; for then *Abraham* muſt have ſeen him only as one who was to come; and therefore his priority of exiſtence to *Abraham*, which is here aſſerted, would be not only foreign, but in a great degree contradictory to the occaſion on which it is introduced. I cannot therefore but con-

[p] *He that blaſphemeth the name of the Lord, he ſhall ſurely be put to death, and all the congregation ſhall certainly ſtone him.* *Levit.* xxiv. 16. Thus in the xth chap. when he ſays, *I and the Father are one, the Jews took up ſtones again to ſtone him.* v. 30, 31.

clude

clude [r] that *Chriſt* here alludes to his frequent, and more eſpecially to two illuſtrious, manifeſtations of himſelf to the father of the faithful. The firſt was in the plains of *Mamre*, when he came attended by two Angels in the form and likeneſs of man: And [q] *Jehovah appeared unto him—and he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo! three men ſtood by him.* Of two of them the patriarch takes no notice; but to the third he addreſſes himſelf, calls him [r] *Lord, the judge of all the earth*, and pleads with him for the cities of *Pentapolis*. [s] *Behold now I have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the Lord, who am but duſt and aſhes. Oh let not the Lord be angry and I will ſpeak.* This perſon, whoſe divine majeſty is acknowledged by *Abraham* and allowed by himſelf, who has the ſacred name *Jehovah* given him by [t] *Moſes*, he ſurely could not be a mere man or created angel; neither could he be God the Father; for [u] *him no man hath ſeen at any time.* We may therefore, with all primitive antiquity, conclude

q *Geneſ.* xviii. 1, 2. See *Juſt. Mart. Dial.* p. 367.
r V. 25. s V. 27. 30.
t V. 22. u John i. 18.

that it was that God who afterwards appeared unto [w] *Isaac*, and called himself *the God of his father Abraham*; to *Jacob*, [x] and called himself *the God of Abraham and Isaac*; to [y] *Moses*, and called himself *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; who is by [z] St. *Stephen* called *the God of glory*; "he who always descended to converse with men from the beginning, setting before us the order of that dispensation which was afterwards manifested."—*He* thus appeared in a *human shape* to *Abraham*, as a prelude and symbol of his taking upon him *human nature*, to lay a foundation (says [a] *Tertullian*) for our faith, that we might the more readily believe that the Son of God was come into the world, when we knew he had formerly done so. The other appearance, in this place more particularly alluded to, was still more illustrious; for in it *Abraham*, having obeyed the command of God bidding him [b] *offer up his only begotten Son, of whom it had been said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called*, received him

[w] *Genes.* xxvi. 24.
[x] *Genes.* xxviii. 13.
[y] *Exod.* iii. 15.
[z] *Acts* vii. 2.
[a] *Tertull.* cont. *Prax.* c. 14.
[b] *Heb.* ix. 17, 18, 19.

even

even from the dead in a figure: [c] God being pleaſed to reveal unto him by way of myſtery, how that ſeed of his ſhould make all the nations of the earth bleſſed; and therefore, for a perpetual memorial of this wonderful revelation, the grateful patriarch [d] called the place Jehovah-jireh, *becauſe in it Jehovah had been ſeen.*

The next period, in which the New Teſtament mentions *Chriſt's temporal pre-exiſtence*, reaches beyond the flood. [e] *Chriſt* (ſays St. *Peter*) *hath once ſuffered for ſins—being put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by the ſpirit: by which alſo he went and preached* τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι *to the ſpirits* which are *now in priſon* (*reſerved*, as he ſays in [f] another place, *unto judgment*) to

[c] *Mede's Diſc.* 13. 25.

[d] *Geneſ.* xxii. 14. See Mr. *Shuckford's Connect.* v. II. p. 21.

[e] 1 *Pet.* iii. 18, 19, 20.

[f] 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. By the conſent of the Jewiſh nation (ſays Dr. *Whitby*) *The generation of the old world have no portion in the world to come, neither ſhall they ſtand up in judgment*; for it is ſaid, *My ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man*—i. e. according to Biſhop *Patrick*, My ſpirit in my prophets *Enoch* and *Noah* ſhall not always be endeavouring to bring men to repentance, but ſhall proceed to puniſh them. Now this puniſhment, adds Dr. *W.* being the drowning of

them *Chriſt preached, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing.* According to the natural and obvious explication of this paſſage, in which all the writers of primitive chriſtianity agree, it was *Chriſt* who preached repentance to the old world by the miniſtry of his prophets: of whom *Noah* was one, being called by our apoſtle [g] *a preacher of righteouſneſs*; and *Enoch* another, for St. [h] *Jude*, ſpeaking of the ungodly in his days, ſays that to them was applicable the *prophecy* of *Enoch*, pronouncing a fearful deſtruction on the antediluvian ſinners; *behold the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints to execute judgement*, &c.

Having thus clearly traced our Saviour's pre-exiſtence as far back as the days of *Enoch*, it will not be difficult to conceive that he was the perſon who in the few generations preceding condeſcended to

the old world, *their ſpirits have been ever ſince kept in priſon*, or *reſerved in chains of darkneſs, to the judgment of the great day.*

[g] 2 *Pet.* ii. 5. [h] *Jude* 14.

manifeſt

manifeſt himſelf to man. And herein we have not only the conſentient teſtimonies of the catholic doctors, but of the *Arians* themſelves. With him therefore did thoſe walk who are ſaid to have [i] *walked with God*; from [k] *his preſence Cain*, after the murder of *Abel*, *went out*; *from his face he was hid*, becauſe from that time he was excluded from his ſpecial protection: he never after this enjoyed that intercourſe with the Mediator God, which he had been pleaſed to continue from the beginning. It was he who appeared to *Adam* immediately after the fall, whoſe voice when our firſt parents heard, [l] *they hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God.* And according to this primitive divinity, the *Jeruſalem Targum* reads *The* Word *of the Lord called Adam*; the *Targum* of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*—*They heard the voice of the* Word *of the Lord God.* And indeed [m] learned men have long ſince obſerved, that the "*Chaldee* paraphraſes, almoſt as "often as mention is made in ſcripture

[i] *Geneſ.* v. 24. [k] *Geneſ.* iv. 14. 16.
[l] *Geneſ.* iii. 8, 9.
[m] See Biſhop *Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith*, p. 28.

" of God ſpeaking with us, aſſiſting us, " and converſing with us, have rendered " the name of God by (*the Word*)", ſignifying, that in thoſe places the ſcripture treated of *the Son of God*, who is called *the Word*. He it was to whom God the Father ſaid, [n] *Behold the man is become as one of us*; with whom he, as it were, conſulted when he ſaid, [o] *let us make man:* upon which paſſage *Epiphanius* obſerves—*This is the language of* God *to his* Word *and only begotten, as all the faithful believe.*

This *Word* or only begotten Son of God was not only pre-exiſtent, as we have already ſeen from ſcripture, within a few days of the beginning; but, if we believe the ſame ſcripture, in the very beginning,

[n] *Geneſ.* iii. 22.

[o] *Geneſ.* i. 26. See Biſhop *Patrick.* Idem ipſe qui ab initio pſalmavit *Adam*, cum quo et loquebatur pater, *faciamus hominem ſecundum imaginem et ſimilitudinem noſtram*, in noviſſimis temporibus ſe ipſum manifeſtans hominibus, &c. *Iren. adverſ. hær.* l. 5. c. 15. *Tertullian* calls it *Præfatio patris ad filium.* de *reſurr. carn.* c. 26. Almoſt all the fathers indeed bring this paſſage in proof of *Chriſt*'s pre-exiſtence: θέλεις γνῶναι ὅτι σὺν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ πρὸ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεώς ἐστι Χριστὸς κύριος ἐλθὲ ἐπὶ τὴν πρώτην βίβλον τὴν γένεσιν. Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον, ὃ κατ' εἰκόνα ΕΜΗΝ, ἀλλὰ κατ' εἰκόνα ΗΜΕΤΕΡΑΝ. *Cyrill. Catech.* x. c. 4.

before

before the creation, before time itſelf: for time and the world began together, time being the meaſure of the exiſtence of one ſenſible thing by the duration of another ſenſible thing. That he was *in the beginning* is expreſsly aſſerted by St. [p] *John*; and that that phraſe is in the Hebrew language equivalent to being *from eternity*, is acknowledged by *Grotius*. This the Evangeliſt repeats twice, and then adds as a proof of it, that *all things were made by him, and* that *without him was not any thing made that was made*. Human reaſon itſelf will teach us, that the creator muſt be prior to the thing created, the cauſe to the effect. We ſee how careful St. *John* is, leſt we ſhould in any way confine or reſtrain this creation; for he firſt *poſitively* aſſerts, that all things were made by him, and then *negatively*, that *without* him was not any thing made that was made. And for the ſame reaſon St. *Paul* comprehenſively tells us, that [q] *by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be*

[p] *John* i. 1. [q] *Coloſſ.* i. 16.

thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.

From this eternal pre-exiſtence and this act of creation our Saviour's *divine nature* is apparent. He that made all things out of nothing could not be leſs than God. And for this very reaſon our apoſtle gives *Chriſt* the pre-eminence above *Moſes*, [f] *inaſmuch as he who builded the houſe hath more honour than the houſe; for every houſe is builded by ſome man, but he that built all things is God.* In the paſſage cited before he is carefully diſtinguiſhed, not only from the viſible and material, but moreover from the ſpiritual and inviſible creation, from *thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers*; by which titles all angels, and archangels, and the whole hoſt of heaven are compriſed. He could not therefore be one of them, as the *Arians* fondly dream; but that *Word* who [g] *in the beginning was with God, and was God.* The name

[f] *Heb.* iii. 3, 4. [g] *John* i. 1, 2.

Jehovah,

Jehovah, the proper and incommunicable name of God, was given to him in all his appearances to the Patriarchs, as [t] the ancient fathers prove at large in their writings againſt the Jews. By the ſame title he is deſcribed by the prophets [u] *Iſaiah*, [w] *Hoſea*, [x] *Zachariah*, [y] *Malachi*; and particularly by [z] *Jeremiah*, when prophecying of him under the name of *the branch of David*, he ſays, *In his days Judah ſhall be ſaved, and Iſrael ſhall dwell ſafely; and this is his name, whereby he ſhall be called*, Jehovah *our righteouſneſs*. He is called [a] *the Lord over all*, [b] *God*, [c] *the true God*, [d] *the great God*. In him [e] *the fullneſs of the God-*

[t] The fathers of the firſt ages in general teach, that the Son of God frequently appeared to the holy men under the Old Teſtament; yea they explain all thoſe appearances in which the name *Jehovah* and divine honours are given to him that appears (although at other times he is called the Angel, or an Angel) of this very Son of God. He is a ſtranger in the fathers who knows not this.—B. *Bull*'s *Def.* p. 14. This aſſertion he proves by quotations from *Juſt. Iren. Clem.* &c. &c.

[u] *Iſ.* xl. 10.—xlviii. 17.
[w] *Hoſ.* i. 7.
[x] *Zech.* ii. 10, 11.
[y] *Mal.* iii. 1.
[z] *Jerem.* xxiii. 6.
[a] *Rom.* x. 12.
[b] *Rom.* xiv. 12. *Heb.* i. 8.—iii. 4.
[c] 1 *John* v. 20.
[d] *Tit.* ii. 13.
[e] *Col.* ii. 9.

head

head is said to dwell: [f] God protests by his prophet *Isaiah*, that he *will not give his glory to another*; but *Christ* did really participate of his glory even before the beginning of the world; for he saith in his human nature—*Now father glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* The same prophet was honoured with a vision of [g] *the Lord sitting upon his throne—and above it stood the seraphim—and one cried unto another and said, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.* Now we are expressly told by St. [h] *John*, that in this illustrious vision it was the *glory of Christ* that the prophet saw. *Christ* therefore is the *Lord of hosts*, the *Jehovah Zebaoth*; whose glory the *seraphim* sung, as they did afterwards in the revelation vouchsafed to [i] St. *John*, saying, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* These titles he himself challenges—[k] *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,*

[f] Compare *Is.* xlii. 8. and xlviii. 11. with *John* xvii. 5.
[g] *Is.* vi. 1, 2, 3.
[h] *John* xii. 41.
[i] *Revel.* iv. 8.
[k] *Revel.* i. 8.

saith

ſaith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come; the Almighty.

No nature except the divine is capable of divine attributes; yet they are all aſcribed to *Chriſt*. That he is *the creator of all things*, and therefore *before* all things, we have already ſeen. That he is *omniſcient* St. *Peter* teaches us when he ſays, [l] *Lord thou knoweſt all things*; and St. *Paul* aſſures us, [m] that *in him are hidden all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, and that [n] *he both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the heart*. "God alone knows the hearts of "all men; yet *Chriſt* expreſsly claims "this knowledge to himſelf, by ſaying "[o] *all the churches ſhall know that I am "he which ſearcheth the reins and the hearts, "and I will give to every one of you ac-"cording to your works.*" He is *omnipreſent*; for he promiſes that, [p] *wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be preſent in the midſt of them*. Laſtly,

[l] *John* xxi. 17.
[m] *Coloſſ.* ii. 3.
[n] 1 *Cor.* iv. 5.
[o] *Revel.* ii. 29.
[p] *Matth.* xviii. 20.

he

he is *omnipotent*; for [q] *he is* not only *the wiſdom* but alſo *the power of God*; [r] *he is able even to ſubdue all things to himſelf*, and [s] *whatever things the father doth, theſe alſo doth the ſon likewiſe; for as the father raiſeth up the dead and quickeneth them, even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will; for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement to the Son.* From hence I argue in the words immediately following, words ſpoken by our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, that [t] *all men ſhould honour the Son even as they honour the Father.* God is a jealous God, and will not ſuffer the honour peculiar to himſelf to be transferred to another.—It is written, [u] *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve:* yet [w] *when he bringeth his firſt-begotten into the world, he ſaith, let all the angels of God worſhip him.* The *Socinians* themſelves acknowledge religious worſhip to be due to *Chriſt:* but to what purpoſe do they worſhip him? for if he is not God, he is

[q] 1 *Cor.* i. 24. [r] *Phil.* iii. 21.
[s] *John* v. 19, 20, 21. εἰ δὲ ἡ δύναμις αὐτὴ ἔυδηλον ὅτι καὶ ἡ οὐσία. *Chryſoſt. in Joan.* x. 30.
[t] *John* v. 23. [u] *Matt.* iv. 10.
[w] *Heb.* i. 6.

not

not omnipreſent to hear, nor omnipotent to ſave them. They indeed make him a God, a nuncupative or titular God, a God by grace and office, not by nature; and by this diſtinction endeavour to clear themſelves from idolatry; but in vain: it is the very crime with which the apoſtle charges the heathen, [x] *they did ſervice to them which are not gods by nature.* We read no where in ſcripture of religious adoration paid to a creature. [y] St. *John* indeed twice owns that *he fell at the feet of an angel to worſhip him:* but he was rebuked; and it is probable that he took him for *the angel of the covenant*, the *Word of God*, which had ſo often before his incarnation appeared in the ſhape of an angel, and might therefore be thought by the apoſtle to appear ſo after his aſcenſion; and the words of the angel, when attentively conſidered, ſeem to convey this idea —*See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-ſervant*—i. e. I am not that Angel which thou takeſt me to be—*worſhip God.*

[x] *Gal.* iv. 8. [y] *Revel.* xix. 10.—xxii. 9.

This

This myſtery of the union of two ſuch infinitely diſtant natures as the divine and human in our bleſſed Saviour, ſo clearly revealed in the word of God, is ſo ſublime and abſtruſe, that I heſitate not a moment to confeſs my utter inability to explain or comprehend it. When we conſider things belonging unto God, we ought never to forget making a diſtinction between giving a reaſon for our *belief* and a reaſon of the *thing believed*. To the firſt our underſtanding is always commenſurate; the other may be and often is of ſuch a nature, as renders it abſolutely impoſſible to be the object of human knowledge. Who can comprehend, and yet who doubts of, the ſelf-exiſtence, eternity, infinity, and omnipreſence of God? Who can explain the manner in which cold clay is fitted to receive and preſerve a vital union with the ſoul? Yet that there is ſuch an union every one of us feels, and nobody in his ſenſes ever attempted to deny. If therefore, in things pertaining to man, man requires not perfect knowledge, why in things ſupernatural and divine ſhould his [z] *lofty*

[z] 2 *Cor.* x. 5.

imagi-

imagination exalt itſelf againſt the knowledge of God? Why ſhould he not think it as poſſible that *God and man ſhould make one Chriſt*, as that *the reaſonable ſoul and body make one man?*

That this great myſtery however, tho' far above reaſon, is not contradictory to it, is evident from the opinion, which obtained univerſally among the heathen, of their gods appearing in human ſhape; an opinion which occaſioned *the men of Lyſtra*, when they ſaw the miracles done by *Paul* and *Barnabas*, to cry out, [a] *The gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men.*

There ſeems in general to be a congruity in the reaſon of things, that a mediator *by office* ſhould likewiſe be a mediator *by nature*; one nearly allied to and having a common intereſt with both the parties, who by his interpoſal are to be reconciled; credit with the ſuperior who is offended, and ſympathy for the offender.

[a] *Acts* xiv. 11.

There

There appears to be a particular propriety in the designation of the *Word* to the work of our redemption, that he should give man a new life who first gave him his being; that the image of God upon our souls should be repaired by him who is the express image of God; that through the alone interposition of the *true and essential* Son, we should receive an *adoptive* sonship, be made partakers of the inheritance; [b] *heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.*

It seems expedient that our Redeemer should have been made *man*, that the same nature which had sinned should likewise suffer; and [c] "that as mankind by *man overcome* was made obnoxious to death, so "by *man overcoming* we should rise to life." This is evidently the apostle's argument, when he says to the *Hebrews*—[d] *it became him—bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings; for both he that sanctifieth and*

[b] *Rom.* viii. 17. *God sent his son—that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal.* iv. 4, 5.

[c] *Iren.* L. v. c. 22. [d] *Heb.* ii. 10.

they

they who are ſanctified are all of one, i. e. nature or condition; *for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren:* and again, [o] *foraſmuch as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf took part of the ſame, that* through death *he might deſtroy him who had the power of death*, &c. Thus did *Chriſt*'s human nature qualify him for ſuffering; but his ſufferings muſt acquire their worth and value from ſome higher quality: and ſurely nothing but the dignity which belonged to it, by virtue of its union with the godhead, could make his blood ſo precious, his ſacrifice ſo meritorious, as to expiate and ſatisfy his father's juſtice for the ſins of the whole world.

Chriſt is the mediator not only of *redemption*, but likewiſe of *interceſſion*; and we may diſcover a fitneſs why in that character he ſhould partake of both natures. His being *man* makes him more inclined, thro' an experimental ſenſe of our infirmities, to pity and ſuccour us; and we, knowing that we have an interceſſor of our own na-

[o] *Heb.* ii. 14.

ture at the right hand of God, may approach him with assurance of mercy. It was moreover requisite that he should be *God*; that the dignity of his person, and his relation with the Father, might add weight to his intercession and confidence to our faith. [f] *We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.* [g] *He continuing for ever hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us.* I am well aware of the advantage which Papists are wont to take of the distinction here made; by asserting, that though there be but *one* mediator of *redemption*, yet there may be *many* mediators of *intercession*. But upon what text of scripture do they found this assertion? We are there taught in express words that [h] *that there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: our God*, in opposition to the many

[f] *Heb.* iv. 15. [g] *Heb.* vii. 24, 25.
[h] 1 *Tim.* ii. 5.

heathen

heathen deities; *one mediator*, in oppoſition to that multitude of inferior *demons*, whom [i] philoſophers looked upon as mediators between gods and men. But to us, as there is but one God, ſo is there alſo but one mediator; who, as our *ſacrifice*, *redeemed* us by ſhedding his blood upon the croſs; and, as our *high-prieſt*, in virtue of his blood thus ſhed, *intercedes* for us for ever in heaven. [k] *For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth* (*as there be Gods many and Lords many*) *but to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

It was he who from the beginning took under his ſpecial protection, comforted, and bleſſed the faithful of all ages. Surely he, whoſe [l] *delights were in the ſons of men* while they were enemies, will not now,

[i] Θεος ἀνθρώπῳ ὲ μιγνυται, ἀλλὰ διὰ ΔΑΙΜΟΝΩΝ πᾶσα ἐστὶν ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος θεοῖς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους. *Plat. in Sympoſ.*
Τὸ ΔΑΙΜΟΝΩΝ γένος ἐν μέσῳ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων. *Plut. de def. Orac.*

[k] 1 *Cor.* viii. 5, 6. [l] *Prov.* viii. 31.

when he has reconciled them to God, ceaſe to love and cheriſh them? He who guided and protected the church which [m] *was not called by his name*, how much more will he now, when he is ſolemnly proclaimed and acknowledged its head, preſide over it, be its guardian, director, and defender? [n] *Who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us.* [o] *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in the time of need*: for [p] *To him that overcometh will he grant to ſit with him in his throne, even as he alſo overcame and is ſit down with his Father in his throne.*

[m] *Iſ.* lxiii. 19.
[n] *Rom.* viii. 34.
[o] *Heb.* iv. 16.
[p] *Revel.* iii. 21.

SERMON VI.

1 Cor. xi. 19.

There muſt be alſo hereſies among you.

WAS it not for the goodneſs of God, which turns thoſe things which are poiſons of nature into medicines of grace; a zealous Chriſtian could not but be overwhelmed with melancholy reflections, upon obſerving with how much difficulty the mind of man is worked upon to embrace, and how eaſily perſuaded to forſake, ſpiritual and divine truths. In all the works of *art*, time is required before the ſeeds of decay are introduced; but in thoſe of *grace*, ſcarcely is the building raiſed, but the beauty of it is defaced by

ſome diſorder, the pillars ſhaken by ſchiſm, the foundation undermined by hereſy, and the whole fabric in danger of being overthrown by apoſtacy and infidelity. I paſs over the fatal ſeduction of our firſt parents, and the numerous inſtances in which their genuine offspring but too faithfully copied after their pattern during the Moſaical diſpenſation. Hiſtory, both ſacred and profane, is full of the earneſt expectation with which the Jews looked for redemption in *Iſrael* by the promiſed *Meſſiah:* yet, when this object of all their wiſhes and hopes appeared amongſt them, with what obſtinacy and prejudice did they reject him and his doctrine? They were indeed the firſt *converts*; but they were likewiſe the firſt *apoſtates*. Scarce was the good *ſeed* ſown, but [a] *thorns ſprang up with it, and choaked it*. Many fell off totally and finally from the goſpel: the few that remained were unſettled and wavering; falſe prophets aroſe among them, [b] *handling the word of God deceitfully*, and [c] *corrupting* the

[a] *Luke* viii. 7. [b] 2 *Cor.* iv. 2.
[c] 2 *Cor.* xi. 3.

minds

minds of others *from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt*. Diverſities of opinions were introduced; feuds, animoſities, and ſchiſms followed; unity was turned into diviſion, the peace of the goſpel into ſpiritual war.

[d] *If theſe things were done in a green tree, what muſt it be in the dry?* If the huſbandry of God planted and watered by the apoſtles did, even whilſt they were alive, thus abound with tares; how could it be expected that, under the care of their ſucceſſors, it ſhould be exempted from them? Indeed the reverſe is but too well atteſted. Even *Jeruſalem*, [e] the mother of us all, this primogenial church (which for fifteen ſucceſſions was governed by our Lord's kindred) [f] remained no longer a virgin, than while ſhe was under the tuition of *James* his brother: ſhe was, immediately

[d] *Luke* xxiii. 31.

[e] Μήτηρ ἁπασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἡ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις. *Conc. Conſt. in Syn. Ep.*

[f] Μετὰ τὸ μαρτυρῆσαι Ἰάκωβον τὸν δίκαιον ὡς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ καὶ αὐτῷ λόγῳ, πάλιν ὁ ἐκθείου αὐτῦ Συμεὼν ὁ τῦ Κλωπᾶ καθίσταται ἐπίσκοπος· ὃν προεθεντο πάντες ὄντα ἀνεψιὸν τῦ κυρίυ δεύτερον· διὰ τῦτο ἐκάλεν τὴν ἐκκλησιαν καρθένον· ἐπω γὰρ ἔφθαρτο ἀκοαῖς ματαίαις· ἄρχεται δ' ὁ Θέβυθις, διὰ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι αὐτὸν ἐπίσκοπον, ὑποφθείρειν· *Euſeb. Ecc. Hiſt.* L. iv. c. 22.

upon his death, corrupted with ſtrange adulterous doctrines by *Thebuthis*, whoſe pride could not brook having *Simeon* the ſon of *Cleopas* preferred to the biſhoprick before him. That every other church was infeſted with them, cannot be denied by any one who is at all converſant with the writings of the primitive fathers, whoſe pious labours were chiefly directed againſt the [g] hereſies prevailing in their times; which, though reſiſted by the conſtancy and zeal of many learned champions of Chriſtianity, ſpread their baleful poiſon far and near; inſomuch that, as [h] *Euſebius* tells us in his life of *Conſtantine*, the diſputes and diviſions among Chriſtians roſe to that height, that the pagans took occaſion from them to expoſe publickly upon the ſtage the venerable doctrines of divine truth to the moſt indecent laughter and ridicule.

Of theſe and ſubſequent diviſions modern infidels likewiſe have not failed to take advantage; urging, that the diverſity

[g] *Epiphanius*, in a book written for that purpoſe, gives an account of *eighty* hereſies which grew up with the goſpel.

[h] L. ii. c. 61.

of

of opinions among Chriſtians affects the truth of Chriſtianity itſelf, is a proof of the uncertainty at leaſt of the divine authority it pretends to, and renders its principles precarious and problematical.

To this argument againſt the goſpel of *Chriſt* the church of *Rome* gives great countenance, by ſtrenuouſly contending that *Unity* among the members is a neceſſary mark of the *true* Church; which title ſhe on that account arrogates to herſelf, and denies to the reformed churches; to ours in particular, becauſe of the different opinions maintained within it, and the various ſects and irreconcileable communions that have gone out from it.

To the infidel we may obſerve, that the diſputes and controverſies among Chriſtians are not about the grounds and principles of their religion, and therefore do not affect Chriſtianity in general, the foundations of which remain unſhaken: and though different human explications of ſome particular doctrines render the different acceptation of thoſe doctrines dubious; yet it by

no

no means follows that the doctrines themſelves, much leſs the truth of Chriſtianity, which is acknowledged by all the diſputants, is thereby rendered uncertain. There are, and always were, and (whilſt our faculties remain limited) muſt neceſſarily ever be, various opinions in every other ſcience as well as divinity: yet will any man from thence argue, that there are no certain principles any where; that ſpeculations in philoſophy are idle, and arts uſeleſs; that no man ought to attempt the recovery of his health or property; but that all human affairs, all concerns in civil and religious life, ſhould ſtand ſtill? We are told that there were in ancient *Rome* people from [1] ſix hundred different nations, who all followed a different way of worſhip: and in early *Greece* "there were as "many religions almoſt as men; for every "man's religion was his fancy." When

[1] For this fact Mr. *Collins*, in his *preface* to his *Diſcourſe on the grounds*, &c. quotes *Lipſius*; but *Lipſius* only ſays almoſt ſix hundred, *ſexcentæ nationes* pene *in urbem fluxerant*. *De magnit. Rom.* l. 4. c. 5. and this *Lipſius* in his turn aſſerts on the authority of *Dionyſius* of *Halicarnaſſus*; whereas the hiſtorian only ſays *a very great number*; μυρίων ὅσων εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐλήλυθότων ἐθνῶν. *Dion.* l. 2. p. 86. *Ed. Hudſ.*

ſcience

ſcience got footing among them, " the " philoſophers, with which that country " abounded, were divided into all poſſible " ſentiments concerning the moſt impor- " tant points of ſpeculation." And why ſhould the enemies of Chriſtianity bring that as an argument againſt *revealed*, which it is not unuſual for them to produce in favour of *natural*, religion. " The variety, " ſays [k] one, and the altercation among " them whetted the wits of *Greece*." " Reaſon, ſays [l] another, had fair play; " politeneſs prevailed; learning and ſcience " flouriſhed." Debate therefore, accord- ing to their principles, is the key to know- ledge; it opens the mind, and enlarges the underſtanding: and our greateſt adverſaries muſt acknowledge, that controverſies and ſchiſms in the church have been attended with theſe happy conſequences. This was foreſeen by a pagan philoſopher, [m] *Themiſ- tius*; who, in order to perſuade the empe- ror *Valens* to moderate his perſecution of thoſe who were of different ſentiments from himſelf, ingenuouſly tells him, that the

[k] *Collins.* [l] *Shaftſbury on Enthus.*
[m] *Socrat.* l. 4. c. 32. *Sozom.* l. 6. c. 36.

diſagree-

diſagreement of opinions among the Chriſtians was but inconſiderable, if compared with that which obtained among the Greeks; praying him withal to conſider, that the moſt excellent and uſeful arts, nay philoſophy itſelf, the mother of all good arts, had riſen from ſmall beginnings; and would never have arrived to ſuch an height of perfection, but by the difference of judgment and ſtrife among artiſts and philoſophers.

What was the ſtate of learning, when men, baſely ſubmitting to the yoke of papal tyranny, durſt not judge for themſelves, but blindly embraced and implicitly followed every doctrine propoſed to them by their ſpiritual guides? Ignorance and error uſurped the ſeats of knowledge and truth, idolatry and ſuperſtition the altars of religion and piety. But when the Chriſtian world, weary of the uſurpation of *Rome*, began to canvaſs the tenets of religion, learning revived, and enabled its votaries to detect and expoſe the corruptions with which truth had been long obſcured and diſgraced: for true religion and learning

ing have always gone hand in hand; the ſame rays of intellectual light have conſtantly diſperſed the clouds of ignorance and error. Contentions about the ſenſe of ſcripture introduced the ſtudy of it in the original, and this occaſioned a cultivation of the learned languages; which amply repaid literature for the aſſiſtances which religion had borrowed from it. It is to diviſions in the church that we owe thoſe ineſtimable treaſures of divine knowledge, the writings of the apoſtles, and thoſe of the ancient fathers, whoſe learning and good ſenſe render them well worthy the attention of every ſcholar. To them we are indebted for the revival of literature among us, for the invaluable works of our firſt reformers and their ſucceſſors, both againſt the papiſts and the numerous ſeparatiſts from our communion; writings, which prejudice itſelf cannot rank below any human compoſition whatſoever. God "ſuffered his holy apoſtle *Thomas* to doubt for the more confirmation of the faith:" and for the ſame purpoſe has he permitted other Chriſtians to doubt, that the truth might be more carefully examined, and more

more firmly eſtabliſhed; and that its profeſſors being, after a diligent and accurate diſcuſſion, rationally ſettled in their belief, might become more honeſt and ſincere in their profeſſion. To hereſies, nay to infidelity itſelf, the whole Chriſtian world is obliged for thoſe laſting proviſions heretofore made in this country for the defence of religion: to them is owing the preſent inſtitution; which it is to be hoped will, through the bleſſing of God on the abilities of thoſe who ſucceed me, anſwer the pious and generous deſign of its author, promote the honour of this ſeat of learning, advance true religion, and effectually ſecure the bulwarks of Chriſtianity againſt the ſecret artifices of its concealed, and the open atttacks of its declared enemies.

It is objected to us, that our diſputes with one another make convulſions in governments, and involve neighbourhoods in feuds and animoſities; whereas [n] among the pagans different notions never diſturbed the civil government; and the philoſo-

[n] See *Collins*, ubi ſupra.

phers

phers themſelves, though they wrote in behalf of their ſeveral oppoſite ſentiments, have not left a book behind them written with the leaſt ſpirit of rancour or malignity. We will not at preſent controvert the latter part of the aſſertion: but with regard to the former, let it be obſerved, that the argument lies againſt the profeſſor, not the profeſſion. Chriſtianity, ſo far from encouraging virulence, every where inculcates meekneſs and charity, and bids us [o] *put away all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking, with all malice.* Yet this forbearance is not to degenerate into coldneſs and indifference; we are exhorted to [p] *contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints.* Errors, however multiplied among believers, are no proofs againſt the truth of religion; but zeal and fervor in diſpute is an argument of the ſincerity of the contending parties, and of the dignity and importance of the thing contended for. Where a diſpute appears light and trivial, a matter of curioſity and mere ſpeculation,

[o] *Epheſ.* iv. 31. [p] *Jude* 3.

it

it is eaſy to debate with civility, and make the diſpute a diverſion and entertainment: but when men are perſuaded that the cauſe they have undertaken is the cauſe of truth, the cauſe of God, and that their eternal welfare is intimately and neceſſarily connected with it, zeal will naturally and inſenſibly hurry the meekeſt into indiſcretion, thoſe of a warm temper into violence and acrimony; who through fear of betraying, too often by their conduct diſhonour, that truth which by their reaſonings they defend and confirm.

[q] The name of Chriſtian is common to every ſect which profeſſes Chriſtianity, as that of philoſopher is to every one who pretends to ſtudy philoſophy: and therefore the different opinions, the errors, and abſurdities of Chriſtians ought not to be charged to Chriſtianity, any more than the different opinions, errors, and abſurdities

[q] This argument is made uſe of by *Juſtin Martyr* in his *Apology* to *Antoninus Pius*; where he takes notice of many blaſphemous hereſies which were, to the great ſcandal of Chriſtianity, even then maintained. *Apol. ad Ant.* p. 53. *Ed. Oxon.*

of

of philoſophers to philoſophy itſelf. They depend upon and proceed from the determination of our minds and wills, which God has not thought fit to over-rule in the oeconomy of the church, any more than in the moral government of the world. What reaſon can be aſſigned, why God ſhould exert his almighty power in reſtraining [r] *Diotrephes who loved the pre-eminence* in the church from *eccleſiaſtical*, any more than other ambitious men who love pre-eminence in the ſtate from *ſecular* rebellion? All human ſocieties are ſubject to inteſtine differences and commotions; armies to mutinies, kingdoms to rebellions; becauſe the members of which they are compoſed are naturally ſubject to thoſe paſſions from whence mutinies and rebellions ariſe; and for the ſame reaſon the church muſt neceſſarily be expoſed to ſimilar inconveniencies as the body politic: which however are in both attended with this *eventual* advantage, that by that means good ſubjects are diſtinguiſhed from the bad, ſincere and faithful Chriſtians from the unſteady and hypocritical.

[r] *3 John* 9.

The different opinions which have at all times obtained in the church are a direct and full confutation of that foul aſperſion caſt upon us by our adverſaries, that a Chriſtian is in his belief merely paſſive: they are a proof that the doctrines of our religion are examined, ſifted, and canvaſſed by its profeſſors; that they make uſe of their underſtanding; and, though like other men liable to prejudices, do not give their aſſent without conſulting that reaſon with which God has for this purpoſe endued every man.

The neceſſity of defending our holy faith againſt modern infidels, and its particular doctrines againſt the corruptions and perverſions of modern heretics, has cauſed Chriſtianity to be viewed in every light; every part of it to be more clearly explained, and the whole better underſtood than it was or poſſibly could be in thoſe ages, when a ſervile attachment to preſcribed opinions kept the intellectual faculties of mankind in a ſtate of perpetual ſtagnation. To theſe advantages the diviſions which obtained in the primitive church have greatly

greatly contributed, by furniſhing us with a moſt concluſive argument for the *authenticity*, as well as by being made an inſtrument of preſerving the *purity* of the ſacred oracles. [s] So firmly, ſays *Irenæus*, are "the goſpels eſtabliſhed, that the heretics "themſelves bear teſtimony to them, each "of them endeavouring to confirm his "tenets by their authority." This put them all as well as the orthodox upon their guard, and made them vigilant againſt the corruptions and interpolations of oppoſite ſects. And thus to *hereſies* it is under the providence of God owing, that the records of the Chriſtian faith have been tranſmitted down to us without any material alteration: the ſuſpicions and jealouſies of Chriſtians of all denominations being conſtantly kept awake; eſpecially in the early ages, when any innovations attempted to be introduced in ſcripture could immediately

[s] Tanta eſt autem circa hæc evangelia firmitas, ut et ipſi hæretici teſtimonium reddant eis, et ex ipſis egrediens unuſquiſque eorum conetur ſuam confirmare doctrinam.—Quando ergo hi qui contradicunt nobis teſtimonium perhibeant et utantur his, firma et vera eſt noſtra de illis oſtenſio. *Iren. adv. hær.* l. 3. c. 11.

(whilſt the originals were yet extant) be by collation detected and confuted.

Theſe are the *eventual* advantages ariſing from hereſies and ſchiſms: were theſe wanting, yet ought they not to ſtagger our faith, or induce us to doubt of any of the doctrines of our religion. The writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles abound with exhortations to unity and concord; the ſpirit of Chriſtianity breathes nothing but love, peace, and charity: Yet the author of our religion, by his prophetic ſpirit, declared that he was [t] *not come to give peace on earth, but rather diviſion.* The doctrines of Chriſtianity are laid down in ſcripture with a plainneſs and perſpicuity ſufficient and ſatisfactory to every well-diſpoſed mind: yet we are every where cautioned againſt *falſe doctrines* and *falſe prophets* who were to ariſe, againſt [u] *men of corupt minds, who raiſe perverſe diſputings.* Theſe diſputings and diviſions in a religion, whoſe doctrines and precepts are ſo averſe to them, are ſurely proofs of the divine

[t] *Luke* xii. 51. [u] 1 *Tim.* vi. 4, 5.

inſpiration

inſpiration of thoſe who foretold them; and therefore ſo far from being an objection againſt their religion, they are on the contrary a ſtrong confirmation of its truth and divine original. And as ſuch they are adduced by [w] *Juſtin* the Martyr againſt *Trypho: For that very reaſon*, ſays he (*becauſe there are ſuch men who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, and acknowledge the crucified Jeſus to be their Lord and Chriſt, yet do not teach his doctrines, but thoſe of the ſpirits of ſeduction*) *we who follow the true and pure doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt are thereby confirmed in our faith, and in the hope revealed by him. For what he by his preſcience foretold ſhould be done in his name, thoſe very things we ſee with our own eyes actually accompliſhed.* He then quotes ſeveral paſſages, wherein our Saviour foretells *diviſions* and *offences*, and warns his diſciples againſt [x] *falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets; which coming in ſheep's clothing, but being inwardly ravening wolves, ſhould deceive many; nay if it was poſſible the very elect.* To theſe might eaſily be added

[w] *Dial.* p. 100. *Edd. Jebb.*
[x] *Matth.* vii. 15. *Matth.* xxiv. 11. 24.

a very large catalogue from the writings of the apoſtles; which abound with predictions of hereſies, and forewarn us of great corruptions of the faith, and in particular of one ſolemn defection and apoſtacy, which was to [y] "overſpread the viſible face of "the catholic church of *Chriſt*, and eclipſe "the light of Chriſtian verity and belief." *There ſhall be falſe teachers among you*, ſays St. *Peter*, *who ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord who bought them.* [z] *The ſpirit*, ſays St. *Paul*, *ſpeaketh expreſsly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits and doctrines of devils—forbidding to marry, and commanding to abſtain from meats*, &c.

This laſt prediction naturally puts us in mind of that church, the members of which (as we have obſerved before) on account of the many ſects and diviſions amongſt us, and their great pretended unity among themſelves, fallaciouſly conclude, and often perſuade men of weak underſtandings, that *our* church cannot be,

[y] Mr. *Mede*'s *Diſcourſe* on 2 *Pet.* ii. 1.
[z] 1 *Tim.* iv. 1.

but

but that *theirs* muſt be and is, the true church.

Neither variety of opinions, nor even diviſions and ſchiſms, can be an argument againſt the truth and catholicity of *any* church, for this plain reaſon—becauſe they are, in the nature of things, incident to *all* churches: and ſurely nothing can be concluded from a common affection of all churches againſt any particular church, any more than againſt an individual from a misfortune common to all mankind. When our Saviour was told of [a] *the Galileans, whoſe blood Pilate mingled with their ſacrifices; he ſaid, Suppoſe ye that theſe Galileans were ſinners above all Galileans, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you nay.* We muſt not intrude into the councils of providence, and judge of perſons by God's viſible diſpenſations towards them, but by their converſation towards God: and in the like manner we ought not to paſs a ſentence of condemnation upon a church, becauſe of God's preſent viſitation of it in

[a] *Luke* xiii. 1, &c.

the hereſies and ſchiſms of ſome of its members, but on the contrary form our judgement of it by the faith which it profeſſes, the doctrines which it teaches, and the manner in which *Chriſt* is worſhipped, and his ſacraments adminiſtered. [b] *It has been declared*, ſays St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians, that there be contentions among you. —Every one of you ſaith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Chriſt.* Some of them deſpiſed his apoſtolical authority; nay ſome denied the reſurrection, which is a fundamental article of the Chriſtian faith: yet notwithſtanding theſe ſchiſms and hereſies, and the ſcandalous vices of *particular* perſons found among them, he ſalutes in both his Epiſtles the church in general, by the title of *the church of God.*

It is union in one general intereſt which conſtitutes the very idea of a community; and communities formed upon bad principles and for bad purpoſes oftentimes agreeing better among themſelves than the good and holy, *unity* alone cannot be an

[b] 1 *Cor.* i. 11, 12.

abſo-

abſolute diſtinguiſhing character of the truth. [c] The ſchiſmatical *Iſraelites*, who formed a ſeparation under *Corah*, were as firmly connected as thoſe who preſerved their allegiance to *Moſes* and *Aaron*; neither were the two tribes, which ſerved the true God at *Jeruſalem*, more at unity among themſelves than the ten others in the falſe worſhip at *Bethel:* yet this very union was criminal in the ſight of God, and therefore brought upon both ſocieties thoſe dreadful puniſhments that are recorded in holy writ. Where do we read of ſuch perfect unity and agreement as in that [d] apoſtate congregation, when both people and high-prieſt joined in making the golden calf, rearing an altar before it, offering ſacrifices, dedicating a ſolemn feſtival in its honour, and ſhouting without one diſſentient voice—*Theſe be thy Gods, O Iſrael, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt!* Nevertheleſs did this perfect concord and unanimity recommend or juſtify their defection? It was a confederacy in rebellion and apoſtacy; and therefore would have been their utter deſtruction,

[c] *Numb.* xvi. [d] *Exod.* xxii.

had

had not *Moſes* by his interceſſion turned God from his wrathful indignation.

At what period was the Chriſtian world more united, than when *Conſtantius* and [c] *Valens* by their perſecutions and cruelties had almoſt extirpated the *Nicene faith*, and eſtabliſhed *Arianiſm* over the whole empire; when truth was confined to the deſerts, and error reigned triumphant in the habitable provinces and the metropolis of the world?

Union is an ornament to a *good* cauſe, but no argument in favour of a *bad* one. If a church is no longer to be accounted true and catholic than whilſt the members of which it is compoſed are unanimous, what ſhall we ſay in defence of the primi-

[c] *Valens* ordered at one ſtroke eighty eccleſiaſtics (who were deputed by the catholics to lay before him their grievances and the violence of the *Arians*) to be put to death. They were all put on board one veſſel; which was ſet on fire at ſome diſtance from the land by the mariners, who ſaved themſelves in the boat. The veſſel with thoſe that were left in it was entirely conſumed. *Socrat.* l. 4. c. 16. The hiſtorian adds, that this barbarity did not eſcape the vengeance of heaven, but was puniſhed by a dreadful famine. See *Univ. Hiſt.* T. XVI. p. 333.

tive

tive church; which, as we have ſeen before, was from the very beginning rent aſunder by hereſies and ſchiſms? What will the church of *Rome* ſay for itſelf, when [f] *Novatianus*, one of her own preſbyters, raiſed a ſchiſm in the midſt of her which ſoon grew into a perfect ſeparation? When [g] *Liberius* ſubſcribed to the ſentence of the *Arian* biſhops, and joined communion with thoſe who granted to *Conſtantius* the title of *eternity*, which they denied to the *Son of God?* Where was its boaſted union, when on the death of *Liberius* two different perſons, *Urſinus* and *Damaſus*, were elected biſhops of *Rome*; part of the clergy and people adhering to one and part to the other, [h] with violent animoſities and blood-

[f] *Novatius*, a prieſt of *Carthage*, who had cauſed a ſchiſm there againſt *Cyprian* being then at *Rome* joined *Novatianus*. They are often confounded. This ſchiſm happened in the year 252. See *Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl.* l. 9. c. 43.

[g] *Liberius* was made biſhop of *Rome* in the year 352. *Ammianus* in the 15th book of his hiſtory tells us, that *Conſtantius* actually took the title of *eternal:* and *Athanaſius* reproaches the *Arians* with acknowledging it. Περὶ τὸ κυρίου προσποιούμενοι γράφειν ἄλλον δεσπότην ὀνομαζουσιν ἑαυτοῖς Κωνσάντιον· αὐτὸς γὰρ ἦν ὁ τὴν δυναστείαν τῆς ἀσεβείας αὐτοῖς παρέχων· καὶ αἰώνιον δὲ αὐτὸν βασιλέα εἰρήκασιν, οἱ τὸν υἱὸν ἀΐδιον ἀρνούμενοι. *Athanaſ. de Synod.*

[h] *Ammianus Marcellinus* tells us, that the prætor *Vicentius* was obliged to quit the town, and mentions as a certain fact,

ſhed on both ſides? When, to aſcend ſomewhat higher, in the time of *Zephyrinus*, [1] *Natalis* the confeſſor having through vanity and avarice embraced the hereſy of *Theodotus*, was the occaſion and the head of a ſchiſmatical ſeparation, being made biſhop by the heretics, and receiving from them a monthly ſalary? Let this pretended pattern of union and concord, this boaſted center of Chriſtendom, recollect the bitter and fierce contentions that have been among its members about *the depoſing power*, *the perſonal infallibility of the pope*, *the authority of general councils*, *the immaculate conception*, and various other doctrines; *Thomiſts*, *Scotiſts*, *Occamiſts*; *Dominicans*, *Franciſcans*, *Janſeniſts*, *Moliniſts*, and *Jeſuits*, all againſt each other; nay council againſt council, and pope againſt pope. Let them recollect *ſchiſms*, not proceeding from different doctrines, but of a far more

fact, that there were no leſs than 137 perſons killed in the church in one day.—Conſtat in baſilica Sicinini, ubi ritus Chriſtiani eſt conventiculum, uno die centum triginta ſeptem reperta cadavera peremptorum. *Amm. Marcell.* l. 27.

[k] This happened about the year 206. *Natalis* afterwards acknowledged his fault, and was admitted again into the boſom of the church. *Euſeb. Ecc. Hiſt.* l. 5. c. 28.

ſcan-

ſcandalous nature, betwixt ſeveral pretenders to the chair of St. *Peter*; each of whom, with an equal arrogance and the ſame claim to infallibility, thundered forth his anathemas againſt his competitors and all their adherents. Let them, I ſay, recollect all this; and then, if unity muſt be the ordeal of a true church, let them aſſume and appropriate that name to themſelves.

It is not bare *unity*, but the object and the cauſe of the union; it is unity in the true doctrine, in the true worſhip, and in the true adminiſtration of the ſacraments; it is holding *the communion of ſaints* that makes a church truly catholic and apoſtolical; and therefore though the ſectaries and heretics in this nation were infinitely more numerous than they are; yet while the *Church of England* continues to preſerve within itſelf that unity which we have juſt now deſcribed, thoſe that adhere to its doctrine and worſhip, however inconſiderable in kind or number. muſt notwithſtanding conſtitute a truly catholic and apoſtolic church. We have every eſ-

ſential

ſential character of unity with the catholic church of *Chriſt*, [k] *one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm*. We acknowledge and pay obedience to the ſame *head* of the whole Chriſtian church, not *an earthly biſhop*, but our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. We have unity with it in the profeſſion of the ſame *faith and doctrine*, not founded on the authority of *man*, but of *God*—that common [l] *faith once delivered to the ſaints*, and contained in the holy ſcriptures. We are at unity with it in the *adminiſtration* and *participation of the ſacraments* according to *Chriſt's* own inſtitution and the apoſtolical practice. [m] *By one ſpirit we are all baptized in one body.* [n] *We being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.* [o] *We are all made to drink into one ſpirit.* Theſe are the eſſential marks and characters of Chriſtianity; which marks whatever particular church maintains inviolate,

[k] *Epheſ.* iv. 5. Una nobis et illis fides, unus Deus, idem Chriſtus, eadem ſpes, eadem lavacri ſacramenta; ſemel dixerim *Una Eccleſia ſumus*. *Tertull. de Virg.* Nam cum Dominus unus atque idem ſit, qui habitat in nobis, conjungit ubique et copulat ſuos vinculo unitatis. *Firmil.* apud *Cypr. Ep.* 75.

[l] *Jude* 3.

[m] 1 *Cor.* xii. 13.

[n] 1 *Cor.* x. 17.

[o] 1 *Cor.* xii. 13.

main-

maintains unity with the catholic church: on the contrary, whatever church departs from any of these departs from catholic unity, and consequently those that separate from such a church prove themselves to be true Christians, by departing from error, idolatry, and superstition; they maintain and manifest their adherence to and communion with the catholic church of *Christ*; they obey the commands of God—[p] *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues.*

As it is our duty to separate from those who depart from the true faith and worship of Christ, so are we on the other hand indispensibly bound to maintain catholic unity; firmly to adhere to, and on no account withdraw from, the communion of those who preserve the doctrines and institutions of our Saviour and his Apostles. Every act of communion with such a *particular* church is a virtual communion with the whole *catholic* church

[p] *Revel.* xviii. 4.

dif-

diffuſive; and conſequently [q] a ſeparation from it is a virtual ſeparation from the catholic church; it is a renunciation of concord and correſpondence with all men and all ſocieties of men profeſſing the ſame faith, and paying the ſame obedience to the laws enjoined by *Chriſt* and his diſciples: which is the true Chriſtian notion of ſchiſm, and conſtitutes its guilt. [r] *It muſt needs be*, ſays St. *Matthew* ἀνάγκη ἐϛι *there* is a neceſſity (not a *proper and abſolute* but a *conditional* neceſſity) *that offences ſhould come*; conſidering the ſtate of the world (which is a ſtate of probation) the freedom of man's will, and the frailty of his nature, it is *morally impoſſible*, or, as St. *Luke* explains St. *Matthew*, [s] ἀνένδεκτόν ἐϛι, it is not to be expected *but that offences muſt come:* but ſuch a neceſſity as this, ariſing entirely from the perverſeneſs and wickedneſs of man, does by no means extenuate guilt, or excuſe him who in any meaſure or degree contributes to this evil: for it is added, *Wo to the man by whom the offence*

[q] Ὁ τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς κοινωνίαν ἀποδιδράσκων μὴ λανθανέτω ὑμῶν τὴν ἀκρίβειαν πᾶσης ἑαυτὸν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀποῤῥήγνυς. *Baſ. Ep.* 75.

[r] *Matt.* xviii. 7. [s] *Luke* xvii. 1.

cometh.

cometh. As by *hereſies* the good ſo likewiſe the bad are made manifeſt; by hereſies *publicly and obſtinately maintained*; for hereſy conſidered as a private opinion, kept ſecret within the breaſt of the perſon who holds it, however dangerous to himſelf, cannot be productive of thoſe miſchiefs which the apoſtle complains of. By *hereſies* he means falſe doctrines publicly and obſtinately maintained; by which animoſities and ſtrife, diviſions and ſchiſms, are introduced into the church; the weak are ſcandalized, and the unwary ſeduced; religion expoſed to contempt, and the truth of God to reproach.

To effect this his purpoſe, the enemy of mankind has never failed finding proper inſtruments among the ignorant, the vain, the ambitious, and the contentious. When churches indeed are guilty of ſuperſtition and idolatry, or any other corruption either in faith or practice; ſo far from endeavouring or wiſhing to diſunite them by diverſities of opinions, he will by all poſſible means ſtrengthen the bands of their union in his intereſt, keep them firmly and

ſteadily attached to their corruptions. On the contrary, the nearer a church approaches in its doctrine and worſhip to ancient and primitive purity, the more he exerts every nerve, and employs all his ſubtilty and malignity to weaken and diſgrace it by contentions and diviſions, if not againſt faith yet againſt charity. For what faction and rebellion are in the ſtate, that ſchiſm and ſeparation are in the church; and therefore God allows of none but what are neceſſary: they are deſtructive of all peace and order, and tend to the confuſion and bane of Chriſtian fellowſhip and charity, to the decay and ruin of Chriſtian piety. Men may talk of love and mutual forbearance; but whilſt altar is ſet up againſt altar and church againſt church, it is morally impoſſible but there muſt be animoſities and envyings, reproaches and contempt to the advancement of the common enemy, and the weakening of the common cauſe.

Theſe particulars—the heinous ſin of ſchiſm, [t] the author and promoter of it, its

[t] *Ignatius* in his epiſtle to the *Trallesians* bids them beware of ſeparation and diviſions as *the ſnares of the devil*; he

miſchievous effects, the diſgrace and detriment it brings on Chriſtianity in general—theſe particulars every true Chriſtian cannot but wiſh were ſeriouſly conſidered by thoſe, who being originally engaged in the ſame cauſe with us have withdrawn themſelves from our communion; that they would lay to heart the woful conſequences of theſe unhappy diviſions, and ceaſe to rend the ſeamleſs coat of *Chriſt*, leſt together with it they tear his body alſo; that they would peruſe with attention and without prejudice not only the writings of our own, but thoſe of [u] foreign divines; thoſe of ſome of the moſt eminent

he adviſes the *Epheſians* to meet often together and receive the ſacrament in peace and unanimity, as the only method to weaken the *powers* of *Satan*, and prevent the ruin he would otherwiſe bring upon them by diviſion. Indeed all the eccleſiaſtical writers conſtantly aſcribe hereſies and ſchiſms to the craft and artifice of the Devil. It was, I conceive, in alluſion to this that *Polycarp* called *Marcion* the eldeſt ſon of the Devil.

[u] Their opinion may be ſeen in *Durell*, *Comber*, *Falkner*, &c. It is worthy of obſervation that the many thouſands, all *Calviniſts*, who came over to this kingdom from *France* on account of their religion, joined communion with the *Church of England*, not with the *Diſſenters*; though the laws of the land left them their free choice and liberty.

[w] among themſelves concerning the *doctrine*, the *worſhip*, and the *miniſtry* of the church of *England*. If they would do this, I am perſuaded that the moſt ſober among them would return, and heal the wounds which they have made; they would find that the ſcruples which have been raiſed in their minds do not concern the fundamentals and eſſentials of religion, and therefore cannot juſtify a ſeparation: they would find that the terms of our communion are lawful; they would return and [x] *have fellowſhip with us; and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.*

If ſcruples however about mere accidents and circumſtances ſhould induce any one, [y] contrary to the judgement and uſage of

[w] See *The Caſe of Lay-Communion* by Dr. *Williams*.

[x] 1 *John* i. 3.

[y] *Euſebius* having given an account of different rites and obſervances in the eaſtern and weſtern churches adds that, notwithſtanding that diverſity, they maintained unity and communion: οὐδὲν ἔλαττον πάντες οὗτοι εἰρήνευσάν τε, καὶ εἰρηνέυομεν πρὸς ἀλλήλους· καὶ ἡ διαφωνία τῆς νηστείας τὴν ὁμόνοιαν τῆς πίστεως συνίστησι. When *Polycarp* came to *Rome* in the time of *Anicetus*; though there was a difference of opinion between them, yet they ſaluted each other with the kiſs of charity: and though neither would give up his opinion, yet

the primitive church, to break the unity of communion; let them not tempt him to break the unity of benevolence and charity. Let not zeal for purity be thought a ſufficient plea for ſpiritual pride and intolerance; for railing accuſations againſt thoſe from whom he differs; for bitter invectives againſt inſtitutions which tend to decency, order, and edification; for odious reflections on a form of worſhip which reaſon and ſcripture approve; for thoſe foul reproaches of ſuperſtition and papiſtical corruption, with which how unjuſtly we are charged the common enemy found to his coſt, when the church of *England* towards the cloſe of the laſt century ſtood alone in the gap, and ſtemmed the torrent of popery ruſhing in and ready to overwhelm the land.

Of the truly Chriſtian ſpirit of forbearance and charity let *us* ſet the example;

yet they received the *Euchariſt* together; *Anicetus* in his own church yielding up out of reſpect the conſecration of the elements to *Polycarp*; after which they departed in peace. This hiſtory, he adds, *Irenæus* recorded, and recommended for the peace and union of the church. *Euſeb. Ec. H.* l. 5. c. 24.

let us endeavour to reclaim thoſe, who have ſeparated from us, with zeal but with temper. Mutual revilings widen the breach and ſhut up all avenues to conviction; if theſe were once open and prejudices removed, the voice of truth would ſoon be heard, the altars ſet up in oppoſition to the altar at *Jeruſalem* be pulled down by thoſe that raiſed them, and the [z] *city* be once more *at unity in itſelf:* then [a] *would Jacob rejoice and Iſrael would be glad*; and the enemies of our holy religion (fully convinced by our concord and unity that [b] *the kingdom of God is righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*) would likewiſe *follow after the things which make for peace,* [c] *be like-minded one towards another according to Chriſt Jeſus,* and together with us *with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

[z] *Pſ.* cxxii. 3.
[a] *Pſ.* xiv. 7.
[c] *Rom.* xv. 5, 6.
[b] *Rom.* xiv. 17.

[This ſubject was very fully and ably diſcuſſed by ſeveral eminent divines during the *Popiſh Controverſy*, and particularly by the learned Dr. *Hickes.*]

SERMON VII.

2 PET. i. 19.

We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.

WE have ſeen in the foregoing diſcourſe how punctually our Saviour's prediction of the ſad eſtate of the primitive church was fulfilled; how it was infeſted with hereſies and ſchiſms, even during the days of the Apoſtles, to whom [a] *God bore witneſs with ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.* God had for wiſe reaſons, ſome of which we have attempted to explain, permitted theſe

[a] *Heb.* ii. 4.

diſorders to moleſt it: yet did he not totally abandon it, nor ſuffer the faithful ſtewards of his myſteries to be entirely unſucceſsful; many that had been ſeduced were reclaimed by their labours, the wavering ſettled, and the true believers confirmed in the faith. It cannot therefore but be highly uſeful for us to enquire into the ſteps taken by theſe unerring guides; that we may be able on ſimilar occaſions to follow the directions of theſe wiſe counſellors, the advice and the precepts which by the conduct and aſſiſtance of the holy ſpirit are delivered down in their writings for our admonition, as rules and precedents for Chriſtians of all ſucceeding generations.

The Epiſtle out of which my text is taken, was evidently written with a view of preſerving the Jewiſh converts from being ſeduced by [b] *falſe prophets and falſe teachers*, who among other damnable hereſies *even denied the Lord that bought them*. It abounds with warm exhortations and

[b] 2 *Pet.* ii. 1.

powerful

powerful arguments againſt all doctrines deſtructive of the true faith; yet the advice which I juſt now read to you is uſhered in with a very peculiar encomium above them all, and in a particular manner recommended by the Apoſtle to the attention of his diſciples. He had urged to them the truth of their belief from that glorious teſtimony given to our Saviour at his transfiguration by God himſelf, [c] *when there came ſuch a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed: and this voice,* ſays St. *Peter, which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the mount.* This was undoubtedly a ſtrong and convincing proof: yet he adds, [d] *We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy,* or (as the paſſage might perhaps be better rendered) *But we hold,* or eſteem, *the word of prophecy to be ſurer, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.*

But what is meant by the *word of prophecy,* which is here ſo much extolled? for

[c] 2 *Pet.* i. 17, 18. [d] V. 19.

various

[e] various have been the expoſitions given of it, and conſequently of the argument which the Apoſtle is ſuppoſed to make uſe of. I ſhall not trouble you with a recital of them; but without farther preface propoſe and endeavour to eſtabliſh what I conceive to be the real meaning of the text, and then add ſome few obſervations upon it.

By the *word* of *prophecy* in St. *Peter*, I underſtand the *ſpirit* or *gift* of prophecy; as by the [f] *word* of *wiſdom* and the *word* of *knowledge* in St. *Paul* are underſtood the *gifts* of ſupernatural wiſdom and knowledge; gifts which, I apprehend, differ no otherwiſe from that of prophecy than parts from the whole. That this gift was then plentifully vouchſafed to the church we are well aſſured from many paſſages in the holy ſcriptures: and the perſons favoured with it ſtand high in the catalogue of church-governors given us by St. *Paul*, [g] being ranked next to the *apoſtles* and be-

[e] See Biſhop *Sherlock*'s Diſcourſes on Prophecy.
[f] 1 *Cor.* xii. 8. [g] 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. *Epheſ.* iv. 11.

fore

fore the *evangeliſts* themſelves. When he lays open to the *Corinthians* the ſtorehouſe of God's graces, he ſcruples not to prefer prophecy to all other ſpiritual gifts; and the reaſon is, [h] *becauſe he that propheſieth edifieth the church.* Hence may be gathered the nature of the *gift* and the *office* of a prophet. The *gift* was, as he explains it himſelf, [i] *underſtanding all myſteries and all knowledge*; the *office*, to make uſe of this gift for the inſtruction of the church. [k] For, though there be no doubt but prophets were endowed with the gift of foreknowledge, and did actually foretel future and contingent events, as a proof of their divine miſſion; yet are they in general repreſented to us as perſons inſpired by im-

[h] 1 *Cor.* xiv. 4. [i] 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2.

[k] The word *prophet*, beſides its grammatical import, viz. *one who foretells future events*, ſignifies likewiſe in the ſcripture language *a revealer of the will of God.* In this ſenſe *Abraham* is ſtiled a *prophet*, and ſo is *John the Baptiſt*; though we read of no *predictions* made by either of them. This ſenſe the word plainly bears when it is ſaid *Exod.* vii. 1. *I have made thee* a God *to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother ſhall be thy* prophet; i. e. the revealer of what thou the God of *Pharaoh* ſhalt ſay to him; nor does it ever ſignify to expound or interpret ſcripture otherwiſe than by a *divine afflatus* or *gift of prophecy*. *Whitby* on *Luke* i. 57.

mediate

mediate revelation with an extraordinary meaſure of wiſdom, for the underſtanding and explaining of the evangelical and myſtical ſenſe of the law and the prophets, that the infant churches might be inſtructed in the myſteries of the goſpel, and confirmed into all truth. To this our Apoſtle refers, when he ſays that *no prophecy of the ſcripture is of private interpretation*; i. e. the expoſition which the prophet gives of ſcripture is not his own private ſentiment, it comes not from his own private ſuggeſtion, but from inſpiration: [m] *for prophecy came not* πότε at any time, *by the will of man, but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.* To theſe unerring guides the Apoſtle refers his converts, who were as yet but babes in Chriſt; and when he does ſo, it is plain that it is to the ſcriptures themſelves that he ultimately refers them; and theſe he recommends as likely to produce a clearer and ſtronger perſuaſion, as a firmer bulwark againſt apoſtacy and errors, than even his own atteſtation of Chriſt's glorious

[m] 2 *Pet.* i. 20, 21.

tranſ-

transfiguration, when a voice from heaven declared him to be the Meſſiah.

Whether the evidence of *prophecy* be abſolutely and in itſelf greater than the evidence of *miracles*, ſeems by no means to be (as ſome have imagined) the ſubject of the Apoſtle's argument. In the particular caſe before us he could not, I imagine, with prudence inſiſt, or indeed lay any great ſtreſs upon the ſole authority of *miracles*. The very perſons againſt whom he wrote, though they contradicted his doctrine, pretended the influence of the ſame ſpirit, the ſame commiſſion from heaven. The myſtery of iniquity had already began to work; [n] falſe prophets, according to our bleſſed Saviour's prediction, had ariſen, who were per-

[n] Such was *Simon Magus*, who not only *bewitched the Samaritans ſo with his ſorceries that they all gave heed to him*, *Acts* viii. 9, 10. but in many places prevailed upon the people to worſhip him. Such were thoſe whom St. *Paul* compares to *Jannes* and *Jambres* the celebrated magicians of *Egypt*, 2 *Tim.* iii. 8. with many others mentioned not only by eccleſiaſtical writers, but alſo by *Joſephus* the Jewiſh hiſtorian. *De bell. Jud.* l. 2. 23.

mitted

mitted to perform ſtrange and wonderful things: [o] *they came*, ſays St. *Paul*, *after the working of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders.* When revelation was thus oppoſed to revelation, and both claimed to have the ſame character of truth ſtamped upon its doctrines by *miracles*, ſomething ſurely beſides miracles muſt be appealed to, to judge between them.

Why then does the apoſtle mention any ſupernatural occurrence at all? Why this of the transfiguration in particular, of which there were only *three* witneſſes?

[p] There was a tradition in the earlieſt

[o] 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9.

[p] *Euſeb. hiſt. eccleſ.* l. 2. c. 1. Though Euſebius mentions only theſe *three* Apoſtles, yet *Clemens of Alexandria* (whom the hiſtorian quotes) adds St. *Paul* in the *firſt* and in the *ſixth* book of his *Miſcellanies*. This great Apoſtle had been called in an extraordinary manner to the miniſterial office by God himſelf, and received the doctrines which he taught by immediate revelation from *Jeſus Chriſt*. It is therefore not to be wondered at that heretics ſheltered themſelves under his authority, and pleaded private tradition from him for doctrines unknown to Chriſtians in general, as well as from the *three pillars of the church*, whom our Saviour had choſen to be witneſſes of that ſupernatural manifeſtation of his glory when God declared him to be his only beloved Son.

ages

ages of Chriſtianity, that our bleſſed Saviour had more particularly inſtructed his three principal diſciples, *Peter*, *James*, and *John* (thoſe three who were preſent at the transfiguration) and taught them ſecretly and ſeparately from the reſt the myſtical ſenſe of the ſcriptures; that this ſcience was by them communicated to the other apoſtles, from whom the Seventy and ſome few others received it; but that it was never committed to writing, theſe hidden myſteries being reſerved for the perfect. What an opening was here made for hereſies and ſchiſms, whilſt the minds of believers were as yet unſettled and liable to be [q] *carried away by every wind of doctrine?* The veneration in which oral tradition was held by the *Phariſees*, the Jewiſh *cabbala* and myſterious literature (which was then much in vogue) paved an eaſy way for the introduction of all theſe kinds of theology among the converts of that nation. The plain literal ſenſe of ſcripture, not at all times eaſily accommodated to hypotheſes, was ſoon abandoned; crude

[q] *Epheſ.* iv. 14.

alle-

allegories and mythological fancies were ſubſtituted in the room of it, and falſe blaſphemous doctrines grafted on the word of God, under pretext of the holy ſpirit, by wicked impoſtors of all denominations; [r] each of whom claimed, as partaker of this tradition, the knowledge of myſteries and an excluſive right of interpreting the holy oracles. Thus [s] *Baſilides* in particular, who introduced among his many heretical opinions ſome of the Egyptian ἀπόῤῥητα into the Chriſtian religion, boaſted of having received his myſtical ſcience from *Glaucias* a diſciple of St. *Peter*. Now if we ſuppoſe (and I cannot ſee any objection to the ſuppoſition; if we ſuppoſe, I ſay) that this tradition took its riſe from thoſe three diſciples having received ſo eminent a mark of *Chriſt*'s favour, we cannot be at a loſs for a reaſon, why our Apoſtle ſhould, upon making mention of the transfiguration, appeal to another cri-

[r] *Moris erat gnoſticis* (ſays the learned *Moſheim*) qui divinos Chriſtianorum libros ab opinionibus ſuis diſſentire non poterant diffiteri, *arcanos Jeſu Chriſti et amicorum ejus ſermones teſtari.*

[s] *Clem. Alex. Strom.* l. 7. p. 898. *Ed. Pott.*

terion

terion for the truth of his doctrine. [t] Satan and his emiſſaries (whoſe policy it always was to counterfeit the ſeal of the ſpirit of God) had already ſeized, or the Apoſtle foreſaw that they would ſoon ſeize hold of that reſpect and reverence with which men neceſſarily receive whatever bears the character of divine authority; and uſhered into the world their impious and blaſphemous doctrines under the ſpecious title of a ſecret revelation vouchſafed to ſo diſtinguiſhed an Apoſtle. To obviate the evil conſequences of ſuch a belief, he,

[t] That this method of quoting the Apoſtles, for doctrines contrary to thoſe which they taught, was practiſed even during their lifetime, may with ſome probability be conjectured from a paſſage in St. *Paul's ſecond Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians*, c. ii. *Now we beſeech you brethren—that ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind or be troubled, neither by ſpirit, nor by word, nor by letter*, as from us—and likewiſe from the concluſion. *The ſalutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is* the token *in every epiſtle:* the *token* undoubtedly of its being *genuine*, in oppoſition to *forged ones*, which had been obtruded upon them as his by ſome of theſe impoſtors. We find that, ſoon after his death, his name was made uſe of to gain credit to one of the moſt dangerous hereſies that ever infeſted the church. *Valentinus* (from whom was derived one branch of the *gnoſtics*) was ſaid by his followers, if we may credit *Clemens of Alexandria*, to have received his occult ſcience from *Theodades*, who had been a diſciple of St. *Paul*.

now introduces this ſupernatural manifeſtation of *Chriſt*'s glory on purpoſe, as it were, to depreciate his own authority, and inform them of another foundation on which they might reſt their faith with greater ſecurity; even the invariable rule of truth, the head and fountain of all divine knowledge, the holy ſcriptures. But as [u] *cunningly deviſed fables* (σεσοφισμενοι μυθοι allegorical and mythological doctrines) were extracted from them by the falſe interpretations of the *gnoſtics* and other pretenders to ſuperior knowledge; he appeals to their genuine meaning, as expounded by thoſe whom the unerring Spirit of God had endowed with extraordinary wiſdom and knowledge, [w] *for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt; till they all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the*

[u] 2 *Pet.* i. 16.

[w] *Epheſ.* iv. 12, 13. That *to be perfect* in the ſcripture language ſignifies to be inſtructed in the Chriſtian faith Dr. *Whitby* has, I think, clearly proved in his annotations on this paſſage and on 1 *Cor.* ii. 6.

fulneſs

fulneſs of Chriſt. What follows my text in St. *Peter* is clearly of the ſame import with this paſſage of St. *Paul*; and, as I apprehend, fully juſtifies the interpretation which I have put upon it. He exhorts his converts to *take heed to the word of prophecy, as a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawned, and the day-ſtar aroſe in their hearts; that is*—until they were ſufficiently inſtructed in the will of God, and arrived to a more perfect knowledge of all the articles of the Chriſtian faith. Till that period came, the gift of *prophecy* conſtantly reſided in the church; but when the myſteries of the goſpel had been fully revealed it was gradually withdrawn, and at laſt totally ceaſed: the writings of the *New Teſtament*, which contain a more perfect light, being added to thoſe of the *Old*, the church ſtood no longer in need of extraordinary aſſiſtance: but every Chriſtian might read and underſtand the will of God clearly revealed in the holy ſcriptures: in which the ſacred interpreters of the will of God, [z] *though they be dead, yet ſpeak:* the

[z] *Heb.* xi. 4.

law and the *prophets* are explained by the goſpel: *Moſes* and *Elias* are ſeen (not by *three* only, as in that glorious viſion referred to by St. *Peter*, but) by every true believer conferring with *Chriſt*.

Though the advice given by the Apoſtle primarily relates to the perſons whom he more immediately addreſſes, and is adapted to their particular ſituation; yet is the duty recommended of general and perpetual obligation, of equal uſe and moment to every Chriſtian of every age; for the truth upon which it reſts is this—that the *ſcriptures are the only rule of faith*, the ſole and infallible judge in all doubts and controverſies. To them St. *Peter* refers us as well as the believers of his time, and (if I am not much miſtaken) in oppoſition to both miracles and tradition which his ſucceſſors have preſumed to ſet up againſt them. But, thanks be to God, our faith [y] *is built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and the prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone*. For where is the

[y] *Epheſ.* ii. 20.

certaint

certainty of divine faith if it depends on other than divine authority? Truth is conſtant and permanent, and muſt therefore have a fixed and immutable baſis. The ſenſes are treacherous, memory unfaithful, reaſon fallible, philoſophy uncertain; but [z] *the word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever.* [a] *Salvation,* ſays our Saviour, *is of the Jews;* doubtleſs becauſe [b] *to them were committed the oracles of God,* the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, which contained the prophecies and promiſes of the *Meſſiah.* If ſuch was the privilege attending the records of the *old* covenant, how great muſt be the excellency of thoſe which furniſh us with a clear revelation of the *new* covenant, which is a full and final perfection of the old? [c] *If that which is done away was glorious, much more that* which remaineth is glorious.

Without entering into the diſpute, how far [d] miracles of themſelves, and unattend-

[z] *Iſ.* lx. [a] *John* iv. 22.
[b] *Rom.* iii. 2. [c] 2 *Cor.* iii. 11.
[d] See a *diſcourſe* in the popiſh controverſy *concerning the teſtimony of miracles* prefixed to a tranſlation of *the School of the Euchariſt.*

ed with any other circumſtance, are to be admitted as proofs of the authority of any revelation, I ſcruple not to apply what St. *Paul* affirms of the gift of tongues to every other outward miraculous work — viz. [e] that *they are a ſign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.* Miracles are undoubtedly a moſt powerful teſtimony: while other arguments work their way by ſlow degrees, they make an immediate impreſſion, and overwhelm, as it were, the mind with their evidence. They are therefore principally calculated

[e] 1 *Cor.* xiv. 22. See St. *Chryſoſtom, Tom.* V. *Hom.* 88. the title of which is διὰ τὶ σημεῖα νῦν οὐ γίνεται, *why miracles are not wrought now. Theſe things,* ſays Pope *Gregory* the firſt, *were neceſſary in the beginning of the church; for in order that the number of believers might encreaſe, faith needed to be nouriſhed by miracles; in the ſame manner do we deal with young trees; we water them till they have thoroughly taken root, and then the watering ceaſes. Greg. in Evang. Homil.* 39. And yet this very pope was one of the greateſt retailers of falſe and ridiculous miracles that ever diſgraced Chriſtianity. Very remarkable likewiſe is the following paſſage from the famous Jeſuit *Acoſta. Miracles are given to unbelievers, and the ſcriptures to thoſe that believe; therefore the primitive church abounded in miracles, becauſe unbelievers were to be called. But the church of latter times will truſt more to ſcripture than to miracles, becauſe believers are already called. Nay, I will ſay boldly that all miracles are vain and uſeleſs if they are not approved by ſcripture;* i. e. *if they have not a doctrine conformable to ſcripture. Accoſt. de temp. noviſſ.* l. 2. c. 19. See likewiſe the *ſecond Nicene Council, Act.* 4.

for

for producing great and ſudden revolutions and introducing new diſpenſations: they are neceſſary credentials to warrant the prophet's miſſion; becauſe they command irreſiſtibly our attention to the doctrines which he preaches, the faith which he propoſes. When that end is attained, the law promulged, and the authority of the lawgiver eſtabliſhed, the *neceſſity* nay the *uſe* of miracles ceaſes; and other means more ſuitable to our nature ſupply their place. A free uſe of our intellectual powers, and a ſober diligent enquiry into the nature, extent, and meaning of the laws will procure a full ſatisfaction of all doubts, and an entire perſuaſion of the truth of any particular doctrine. For God having been pleaſed to make us rational creatures requires of us rational obedience; and therefore does not in the *ordinary* courſe of things ſuperſede the exerciſe of thoſe glorious faculties which, as they render us juſtly anſwerable for the ſin of infidelity againſt ſatisfactory evidence, ſo likewiſe do they ſtamp a value upon, give a comelineſs and beauty to even our faith. Our Saviour himſelf does not reſt the di-

vine demonſtration of the goſpel entirely upon miracles, but often appeals to the ſcriptures as [f] *teſtifying of him* and *having the words of eternal life*. The apoſtles followed their Lord's example, and reaſoned to the Jews out of the ſcriptures, confirming their doctrines from the books of the Old Teſtament. [g] And it is recorded of their immediate ſucceſſors, men likewiſe endowed with the power of working miracles, that they were particularly careful, after they had laid the foundation of the faith, to deliver to their converts the holy goſpel in writing. To theſe ſacred records the ancient fathers of the church conſtantly appeal in all their doubts and diſputes with heretics. [h] *Let them*, ſays St. *Auſtin* ſpeaking of the *Donatiſts, prove their church*,

[f] *John* v. 39.

[g] *Euſeb. Hiſt. Ecc.* 3. 37. The apoſtles (ſays *Theophylact*) wrote the *goſpels* ἵνα ἐκ τούτων διδασκόμενοι τὴν ἀλήθειαν μὴ παρασυρῶμεν ὑπὸ τῆ ψεύδους τῶν αἱρέσεων, &c. that we learning the truth *from them* might not be perverted by the falſhood of hereſy, &c. *Theoph. Proem. in Matth.* The apoſtles, ſays *Irenæus*, firſt preached the goſpel, et poſtea per dei voluntatem in ſcripturis nobis tradiderunt fundamentum et columnam fidei noſtræ futurum, afterwards delivered to us in the ſcriptures what was to be the ground and pillar of our faith. *Iren.* l. 3. c. 1.

[h] *Auguſt. de unit.* c. 18.

not

not by deceitful ſigns and wonders, but out of the law and the prophets, out of the word of Chriſt himſelf, out of the works of the evangeliſts, out of the books of ſcripture whoſe authority is canonical. Either, ſays he afterwards with reſpect to the miracles pretended to have been wrought by ſome of them; *either there is no truth in what is reported, or if they have really performed any thing miraculous, the more ought we to be upon our guard; becauſe our Saviour (after having told us that deceivers ſhall ariſe who with ſigns and wonders ſhall, if it were poſſible, deceive the very elect) adds, recommending it with vehemence,* "Behold I told you before." Theſe paſſages from one under whoſe authority the patrons of miracles ſo often endeavour to ſhelter themſelves might, one would imagine, check their petulance when they innocently call upon us to produce miracles in proof of our doctrines, and their arrogance when they preſumptuouſly claim an excluſive right to the title and benefits of a church on account of [1] *the glory,* as they term it, *of* their

1 This is the eleventh out of fifteen notes by which the famous Cardinal *Bellarmin* pretends to find out the true catholic

pretended *miracles*. The holy ſcriptures are a fair copy of God's will declared by *Chriſt* and his apoſtles, God himſelf confirming their declaration [k] *by divine miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt:* and the authenticity of this copy is proved beyond all doubt by the uniform concurrent teſtimony of all intermediate ages. Whoever therefore have again recourſe to the evidence of miracles for the credibility of any of the doctrines of Chriſtianity, require an additional ſeal to what God has already ratified; they depreciate his teſtimony, and render all his promiſes of none effect. This the *Romaniſts* muſt allow to be their caſe, or contend that their doctrines are new, or miſſion extraordinary. If their *miſſion* is extraordinary, it is not derived from the apoſtles with whom *Chriſt* promiſed to be [l] *always, even unto the end of the world:* and if their *doctrines* are new, we only ſay with St. *Paul*, [m] *If any man or angel preach another goſpel*, than that which

catholic and infallible church; all of which he takes care to appropriate to the church of *Rome* only.

[k] *Heb.* ii. 4.

[l] *Matt.* xxviii. 20.

[m] *Gal.* i. 8.

Chriſt

Chriſt and his apoſtles preached, *let him be accurſed.*

But if *miracles* fail, the *Romaniſts* have another reſource; there are, if you believe them, unwritten [n] *traditions* preſerved in the church: into theſe all faith is reſolved, and every Chriſtian is enjoined to hold them (whenever the church pleaſes to produce them) in equal eſteem and veneration with the ſcriptures themſelves.

We have already obſerved on the authority of the primitive writers, that the true faith was firſt corrupted by perſons, who pretended to a more perfect knowledge of the doctrines of Chriſtianity tranſmitted by *oral tradition* from *Chriſt* and his apoſtles.

[n] This verity and diſcipline is contained in the written word and in the *unwritten traditions* of the fathers—reverencing all the books as well of the Old and New Teſtament, of both which God is the immediate author; as alſo the *traditions* themſelves, belonging both to *faith* and manners, dictated as it were from the mouth of *Chriſt*, or of the holy ſpirit, and *preſerved in the catholic church in a continual ſucceſſion.*——If any one reading over theſe books—in the old vulgar *Latin* edition, does not hold them for *ſacred* and *canonical*; and knowing the *before-ſpecified traditions* does induſtriouſly contemn them, let him be *anathema* or accurſed. *Counc. of Trent, Seſſion* 4.

Now

Now if *tradition* perverted the truth ſo near the times in which the apoſtles lived, nay perhaps whilſt ſome of them were ſtill living; how can we expect that it ſhould at this diſtance ſecure us from error? Let us only look back to the earlieſt ages of the world, when the want of writing made the uſe of tradition neceſſary, and the long lives of men rendered it leſs liable to accidents. What will hiſtory inform us but that error is almoſt coeval with truth? Religion committed to the care of ſo untruſty a guardian ſoon degenerated into ſuperſtition and idolatry; the law of nature was ſcarce written on the heart of man, but the characters became illegible. God therefore, when he choſe to himſelf a peculiar people, engraved with his own finger the laws which he gave them upon two tables, and commanded them to be kept with religious care, that the people might have recourſe to them upon all occaſions. • *To the law and to the teſtimony*, ſaith God himſelf through the mouth of his prophet *Iſaiah*, when the people were in danger of

• *Iſaiah* viii. 10.

being

being ſeduced into idolatry. And in the time of general corruption what did the good *Joſiah do?* [p] *He read in the ears of the people the words of the book of the covenant, and he made a covenant before the Lord to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book.*

We know indeed that traditionary rites and cuſtoms obtained much at laſt in the Jewiſh church: but does not our Saviour ſay, [q] *in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men: for laying aſide the commandment of God ye hold the tradition of men!* It is the appointment of God which conſtitutes a rule of faith: and can it enter into the heart of man to conceive that our Saviour would appoint that in *his* church, which he condemns in the *Jewiſh?* As the goſpel was not to be confined within the narrow bounds of *Judea* but propagated all over the earth, it was in greater danger of being corrupted by oral tradition, and conſequently ſtood in greater need of being ſecured by writ-

[p] 2 *Kings* ii. 3. [q] *Mark* vii. 7, 8.

ing,

ing, and committed to the keeping of every Chriſtian, as a ſtanding and public record of the will of God and his own duty. And who that has ſuch a record well authenticated would truſt to [r] vague and uncertain report? For why ſhould the evangeliſts or apoſtles omit any eſſential doctrine, any article neceſſary for the belief of a Chriſtian? It could not be out of *ignorance*, even putting blaſphemy out of the queſtion; becauſe the traditions, which are ſuppoſed to contain theſe doctrines and theſe articles, are likewiſe ſuppoſed to proceed originally from them. To charge them with doing it *knowingly* is to charge them with partiality, with malice, with ſacrilege; with the ſame ſacrilege that the church of *Rome* is guilty of, when by depriving her members of the uſe of the ſcriptures ſhe [s] *takes away the key of knowledge, and* [t] *ſhuts up the kingdom of heaven againſt men.* It is moreover giving them the lie,

[r] Τὰ γὰρ ἀγράφως λεγόμενα πάνεται μετ' ὀλίγον ἔκ ἔχοντα ἀπόδειξιν; *For thoſe things which are ſpoken without being committed to writing are of ſhort duration, becauſe they have no certainty.* Origen. *Dial. cont. Marc.*

[s] *Luke* ii. 52. [t] *Matt.* xxiii. 13.

ſince

ſince they every where profeſs that they make known to us *the whole goſpel of Chriſt*, the whole counſel of God.

But ſuppoſing there were any ſuch *apoſtolical traditions* as are pretended; they are acknowledged to have been delivered ſecretly and privately, and deſigned for the inſtruction of a choſen few: if ſo, then they were not intended for public uſe, and of conſequence not neceſſary to be publicly known; if they were not neceſſary to be publicly known, they could not be eſſential to faith, and therefore cannot be impoſed upon us as fundamental articles of our religion.

St. *Paul* tells us that [u] *the holy ſcriptures are able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation:* St. *James* that [w] *God begat us with the word of truth:* St. *Peter* that [x] *we were born again not of corruptible ſeed but of incorruptible*, by the word of God *which liveth and abideth for ever.* Yet we have been told that

[u] 2 *Tim.* iii. 15. [w] *Jam.* i. 18.
[x] 1 *Pet.* i. 23.

it

it is "[y] a dead letter, capable of different "meanings, according to the difference of "time, accommodating itſelf to the hu- "mours and maxims of the church;" that "[z] to receive it as the only rule of faith is "the foundation of atheiſm and impiety;" that "it is the church which gives it all "its authority and weight, and that without "the church it would not merit more credit "than the Fables of *Eſop* or the Alcoran of "*Mahomet*."

While we wonder at the abſurdity and abhor the profaneneſs of tenets like theſe, we cannot without ingratitude omit our thanks to the Almighty for the benefits we enjoy in the communion of a church, which not only reſts its belief on the doctrines contained in the holy ſcriptures, but likewiſe allows every member of it

y *Cuſan. ad Boh.* Ep. 2. z *Bellarm. de verb. Dei.* iv. 4. Who can read theſe and other like paſſages without calling to mind the account which *Irenæus* gives us of the heretics of his time? Cum ex ſcripturis arguuntur in accuſationem convertuntur ipſarum ſcripturarum, quaſi non rectè habeant, neque ſunt ex authoritate, et quia variè ſunt dictæ, et quia non poſſet ex his inveniri veritas ab his qui neſciunt traditionem: non enim per literas traditam illam, ſed per vivam vocem. *Iren.* l. 3. c. 2.

free

free acceſs to the laws of his Saviour, whoſe [a] *words are ſpirit and life*. To lay a reſtraint upon the uſe of them is in itſelf ſo abſurd and irrational, ſo manifeſtly contradictory to God's great purpoſe of revealing his will to all men; that it is juſtly matter of the higheſt admiration, as well as indignation, that any Chriſtian church could be guilty of and juſtify ſuch an enormity, under pretence of preventing miſchiefs which muſt ariſe from the reading of them.

That ſome parts of ſcripture are obſcure and difficult to be underſtood we deny not; and that [b] *the unlearned and unſtable wreſt them to their own deſtruction* we likewiſe acknowledge. It is what St. *Peter* himſelf complained of, and yet he did not forbid the uſe of them: he knew that they were *holy*, *juſt*, and *good*; and therefore if "men (whoſe curioſity is above their "faith, whoſe affectation of ſingularity "above the care of their ſouls) will ſearch "the ſcriptures to find out new doctrines,

[a] *John* vi. 63. [b] 2 *Pet.* iii. 16.

" and if they cannot find them will bring " them thither;" the fault lies not in the ſcriptures, but in their own raſhneſs and preſumption: they are, ſays St. *Paul*, [c] *proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions and diſputes about words, whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, evil ſurmiſings, perverſe diſputings of men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth.* But to argue from *abuſe* to *non-uſe* is not logical. The perverſion of ſcripture cannot with propriety be charged upon ſcripture itſelf; eſpecially when it proceeds, as it generally does, from ignorance, pride, prejudice, or intereſt. For let a paſſage be never ſo expreſs, and the ſenſe common and obvious; yet, if the doctrine contained in it militates againſt the profeſſions of a zealot, ſome other meaning muſt at all events be contrived, and the words (though written with ink made of light) tortured till they are at laſt obliged to comply with the principles of the interpreter.

[c] 1 *Tim.* vi. 4, 5.

To

To prevent or cure theſe diſorders, our adverſaries pretend that there is in their church an *infallible judge* appointed by God himſelf. The apoſtles were, if any men can be, infallible judges; yet there were in their time (as their own writings fully prove) as many controverſies and differences about matters of faith, as many and as great hereſies and ſchiſms, as have been ſince in any age of the church. *Infallibility* therefore is no certain remedy againſt them: but ſuppoſe it were, where are we now to find it? for, though the *Romaniſts* boaſt much of having this infallibility among them; yet where it is lodged, whether in the *pope alone*, or in a *general council alone*; or in the *pope and council concurring*, or laſtly in the *church diffuſive*, are points in which they are not yet agreed; and truly (as has often been obſerved) no great ſtreſs can be laid upon the infallibility of that church, that does not itſelf know where its infallibility reſides.

The doctrines of Chriſtianity are of two kinds, the *moral* and the *myſtical*. Theſe

laſt may likewiſe be divided into two claſſes. The *firſt* claſs conſiſts of what St. *Paul* calls [d] *the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt*, the rudiments and groundwork of faith, the fundamentals of our religion, the articles contained in the Creed. The *ſecond* claſs is made up of truths important indeed but not ſo obvious; ſuch as the wonderful diſpenſations of God towards the amazing work of our redemption, his eternal purpoſe even before the world began, his gradual revelations to the patriarchs, the types, prophecies, and various prefigurations of the *Meſſiah* in the legal worſhip, the calling in of the Gentiles upon the rejection of the Jews, and the future glorious ſtate of the church when, upon God's calling again his choſen people, [e] *the Gentiles ſhall come to their light, and kings to the brightneſs of their riſing*—Theſe, I ſay, and others of the like ſublime and abſtruſe nature, form the ſecond order of *myſtical* doctrines. Now rightly to appre-

[d] *Heb.* vi. 1. [e] *Iſ.* lx. 3.

hend

hend and reap benefit from theſe requiring more ſtudy, a greater uſe and improvement of reaſon, a ſounder judgement, and a more enlarged underſtanding than God has thought proper to endow every man with; they are therefore (though highly ornamental of the Chriſtian character) not of abſolute, indiſpenſible, univerſal neceſſity. But the *moral* and the firſt claſs of the *myſtical* doctrines, being abſolutely neceſſary to the very being of a Chriſtian, are therefore delivered without obſcurity or ambiguity, are plain and evident to all, even perſons of the meaneſt capacity. "*Theo-*" *logy* is the profeſſion of a few, *religion* "the duty of all."

What ſhall we ſay then of thoſe ſublime objects of the catholic faith, thoſe divine myſteries which are confeſſedly above the reach of all human underſtanding? Is not the belief of them of abſolute and indiſpenſible neceſſity? Undoubtedly it is; and therefore are they, like all the other doctrines contained in the firſt claſs, expreſsly and poſitively revealed; and (though their

nature and relations are utterly inconceivable by human reaſon, yet) to the truth of them, becauſe they are confirmed by the teſtimony of God, human reaſon itſelf cannot but give a firm, full, and immediate aſſent. For "truth being a confor-"mity to the nature and reaſon of things, "the word of him who ſpake all things "into being cannot but be infallible "truth." But is the book of *nature* full of myſteries, and ſhall we wonder at a few in the book of *grace?* [f] *Thine own things*, ſays the angel to *Eſdras*, *and ſuch as are grown up with thee canſt thou not know; how ſhould thy veſſel then be able to comprehend the way of the higheſt?* If ſenſible things are above our reach, ſhall we repine becauſe we cannot graſp thoſe that are inviſible? Let us rather bleſs God for what he has been pleaſed to reveal clearly, and what reaſon cannot fathom let faith contemplate. For though it be utterly impoſſible that any revelation from God can be contradictory to reaſon, for then

[f] 2 *Eſd.* iv. 10, 11.

truth

truth would be at variance with truth: yet it is very poſſible that there may be truths in that revelation, to the clear perception and full comprehenſion of which our faculties are not proportioned; [g] *that our faith may not ſtand in the wiſdom of man, but the power of God.* And however the pride of man may recoil at the thought of a truth inconceivable by him, yet ſober reaſon will readily acknowledge and adore the wiſdom and the goodneſs of God in propoſing myſteries for the trial of our faith, as well as precepts for the exerciſe of our obedience. They command our attention and veneration; they teach us to ſet a due value on the means of grace, to have a juſt ſenſe of our imperfections and the all-ſufficiency of God. Humility and piety are twin-ſiſters, offspring of that [h] *wiſdom which is from above.* The man that cheriſhes theſe Chriſtian graces cannot but be highly favoured by the divine principle which produced them; heavenly truths

[g] 1 *Cor.* ii. 5. [h] *James* iii. 17.

meeting with no obſtruction in their paſſage to his mind ſtrike with full force, and make a deep and laſting impreſſion. Such a man as this; a man (who with a becoming awe and reverence enquires into that good, perfect, and acceptable will of God) finds new truths continually emerging, and beaming out their light upon his underſtanding: while he converſes in the book of God, he converſes with and is partaker of all the privileges and revelations of the Prophets, Evangeliſts, and Apoſtles; he converſes with God himſelf: God, by the miniſtry of his word, ſpeaks to him from heaven; he ſpeaks to his heart and ſoul ſuch comfort and invincible demonſtration, as all the pride of learning and philoſophy can never attain to.

Thus does the true Chriſtian begin here upon earth an intercourſe and communion with God, and enjoys through the goſpel a foretaſte of that marvellous light, which will be the portion of the ſaints in bliſs; when grace being perfected in glo-

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ry, we ſhall view more nearly the [1] *myſtery hid from ages*, the ſtupendous work of our redemption, the wonders of God's nature, the riches of his goodneſs, and the treaſures of his mercy. [k] *Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face: now we know in part, but then we ſhall know even as we are known.*

[1] *Col.* i. 26. [k] 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12.

SERMON VIII.

PHIL. iv. 8.

Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.

IT is obſerved of St. *Paul* that, however obſcure and irregular his argumentation may ſometimes appear to thoſe who want either abilities or attention to trace the connexion of the ſeveral parts of which it is compoſed, yet his general method in all his epiſtles is plainly regular and eaſily per-

perceptible to every underſtanding. Having given a ſolemn teſtimony of his affection by recommending the churches to the peace of God, he begins his diſcourſes with *doctrinal* and ends them with *moral* precepts; having firſt grounded and ſettled his flock in the true faith, he then proceeds to recommend a practice ſuitable to that faith.

It has been my aim and ſincere endeavour to follow the example of this bleſſed Apoſtle: and, having accordingly in my former diſcourſes treated of the chief fundamental points contained in the ſpeculative part of our holy religion, I now purpoſe, by God's aſſiſtance, to recommend a conduct correſponding to our profeſſion; to prove that not only the belief of *whatſoever things are true*, but likewiſe the practice of *whatſoever things are honeſt, juſt, and pure* is required of us as neceſſary to ſalvation.

The *intellectual* virtues indeed in point of order take place of the *moral* ones, becauſe a rational agent acts in conſequence of

of knowledge: for how, without the knowledge of our duty, can there be an eſtabliſhed rule of our obedience? But though knowledge is thus eſſential to practice, yet is not practice the leſs neceſſary to knowledge. [a] *Who is a wiſe man, and endued with knowledge among ſt you? let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom.*

One of the many devices, made uſe of by the enemy of mankind, is to keep men in extremes of opinion with regard to matters of faith and doctrine: he [b] *transforms himſelf into an angel of light*; and, under the ſpecious pretence of ſaving them from a dangerous error, hurries them away to the oppoſite precipice; paſſing over the intermediate ſpace, where the ſaving and profitable truth is uſually to be found at an equal diſtance from both extremes. Thus with reſpect to the doctrines now under conſideration—A pernicious error was by his artifices introduced in the infancy of the church, by which men were taught to

[a] *James* iii. 13. [b] 2 *Cor.* xi. 14.

believe

believe that *works alone without faith* were ſufficient to juſtification and ſalvation; but, this hereſy being confuted by apoſtolical arguments and authority, he very dexterouſly changed the queſtion, and inſtilled into weak minds the more flattering poiſon of the oppoſite doctrine, perſuading them that they might be juſtified *by faith alone without works:* whereas the ſcriptures join them both together, expreſsly teaching us that nothing availeth to ſalvation [c] *except faith which worketh by love*; i. e. a vigorous and operative faith productive of good works, a ſincere obedience proceeding from a true and vital faith.

And firſt, that *works alone* are not ſufficient to procure God's favour, he himſelf has clearly taught us in that comprehenſive epitome of his laws, which he wrote with his own finger, and delivered by the miniſtry of his ſervant *Moſes* to his choſen people. The commands of the *firſt* table immediately and ſolely reſpect his authority, and the obedience and worſhip which

[c] *Gal.* v. 6.

is

is due to him: from whence this inference naturally follows, that our faith in him and obedience to his authority are the foundation of the moral commandments contained in the *ſecond* table. This conſideration greatly exalts and ennobles morality, intereſting the Supreme Being in all our acts of virtue; which if they proceed from any other principle, inaſmuch as they reſpect not God, are at leaſt a virtual diſavowal of his authority. In all our actions as well as opinions are to be conſidered what the ſchoolmen call the *materiale* and the *formale*; not only the act itſelf, but the fundamental ground on which it reſts, and on account of which it is performed. For it is not the ſuperſtructure that ſupports the foundation, but the foundation that gives ſtability to the ſuperſtructure: let the edifice be ever ſo ſplendid or ſtrong in itſelf, yet (if the foundation be unſound) the whole building muſt partake of the weakneſs upon which it relies. [d] There are many truths believed, the

[d] See this point argued with his uſual acuteneſs and preciſion by Dr. *Crackenthorp* in his *Vigilius dormitans*, c. 13.

ſcriptures

ſcriptures themſelves are received in the church of *Rome*; yet I am afraid that this belief and acknowledgement have very little of the nature of a true Chriſtian faith; becauſe, however true and commendable they are in themſelves, they proceed from an antiſcriptural principle: they depend upon the infallible authority of the pope enjoining them, a doctrine which is contrary to and ſubverſive of faith. The caſe is the ſame with our outward actions: they may be good in themſelves, but not in the agent; in them the will of God may be *performed*, but not *obeyed:* for there is a wide difference and eaſily perceivable between an act itſelf and the obedience obſerved in that act. Every moral virtue conſidered abſtractedly is without all doubt in the matter of it agreeable to the will of God; but it does not follow that the will of God is obeyed in the performance of every moral action. It may and too often does proceed from merely human principles, from cuſtom, example, convenience, intereſt: and, as water will not riſe higher than the level of the ſpring from which it flows, ſo neither can an act be better than

than the motive from which it took its rise. Should we therefore allow it even the highest principle which a mere moral philosopher can claim, the *idea of the intrinsic beauty and loveliness of virtue*; yet even then, inasmuch as it wants the concurrence of that which God requires, and which reason itself properly exercised must teach us to be the principal duty in nature, i. e. *respect to his laws and submission to his authority*—wanting that principle it cannot recommend man to God's favour. It has indeed so far the nature of sin, that it is setting up the understanding of man against the knowledge of God: it is a renunciation of our allegiance to him, a contempt of those attributes of power, wisdom, goodness, and holiness, upon which his laws and our obedience to them are founded. [e] *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power*; for *thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure*, i. e. by thy will alone and divine command,

[e] *Rev.* iv. 11. Upon this principle it is that the *Roman philosopher* calls Piety *Justice towards God.* Est enim pietas justitia adversum deos. *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* l. 1.

and for the manifeſtation of thy glory, *they are, and were created.* How can God receive glory and honour from his creatures, but by their ſolemn acknowledgement of his ſupreme dominion and authority over them, and their entire dependence upon him? And how can they ſhew that acknowledgement but by conſtantly looking up to him with a filial fear and reverence, and by directing their actions out of conſcience of their duty to him, making his will their motive, his laws their rule, and his glory their end. [f] *If I be a father, where is mine honour?* [g] *If you call him father, who without reſpect of perſons judgeth according to every man's work, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear*, i. e. a reverential and godly fear, ſuch as becometh *obedient children.*

Self-gratification and ſelf-ſufficiency were the cauſe of the firſt ſin, and have ever ſince been the chief ingredients in all ſubſequent

[f] *Mal.* i. vi. [g] 1 *Pet.* i. 17. *If you call him father who judgeth*—This certainly is the meaning of εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν κρίνοντα, not, as our Verſion reads, *If you call upon the father who judgeth.*

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tranſgreſſions: nay, they have ſcarce ever failed to inſinuate themſelves in and pollute our beſt actions. This fatal prevalency of thoſe two principles was the cauſe, why the [h] *Stoics* and *Epicureans* ſtood foremoſt in liſt of thoſe who oppoſed St. *Paul* preaching the goſpel at *Athens:* he preached [i] *Chriſt crucified to the Greeks fooliſhneſs*; becauſe his doctrine deſtroyed that *ſenſual ſelf* which was the meaſure of the one, and diſowned that *moral ſelf* which was the foundation of the other philoſophy. If our actions have reſpect only to ourſelves, how can we expect that God will regard us, while we are thus regardleſs of him; that he will honour us while we ſeek honour from ourſelves, and not [k] *the honour which cometh from God only?*

How far indeed God will accept or reject the moral virtue of thoſe, who had not ſo exact a knowledge of him and of his will as we have been bleſſed with, would be preſumptuous in us to attempt to deter-

[h] *Acts* xvii. 18.
[i] 1 *Cor.* i. 23.
[k] *John* v. 44.

mine. Thus much we may venture to aſſert, becauſe it is expreſsly declared, that [l] *God is rich to all that call upon him*; that [m] *he is the God not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles*; that [n] *he is no reſpecter of perſons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted with him*; that [o] *when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; they having not the law are a law unto themſelves.* Yet even here faith is by no means excluded; to works of righteouſneſs is added the fear of God; and the obſervance of that natural law is required by which man, being capable of knowing God, was bound to honour him as God. However he may be pleaſed to deal with the gentile world, his declarations with regard to us are explicit. [p] *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.* As [q] *the altar ſanctifies the gift*, ſo does faith conſecrate our actions rendering them [r] *ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God by Jeſus*

l *Rom.* x. 12.
m *Rom.* iii. 29.
n *Acts* x. 34, 35.
o *Rom.* ii. 14.
p *Heb.* xi. 6.
q *Exod.* xxix. 37.
r 1 *Pet.* ii. 5.

Chriſt.

Chriſt. [s] *By faith the elders,* all righteous men from the foundation of the world, *obtained a good report.* It was *faith* which recommended the ſacrifice of *Abel* to God; while *Cain*'s offering and duty, which did not proceed from the ſame inward principle, were both rejected. For [t] *unto the pure all things are pure; but to them which are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled.* All their actions (however good in appearance, whatever external conformity they may have to the letter of the law) are polluted by the infidelity of their hearts: for where the fountain is poiſoned, all the ſtreams iſſuing from it partake of the infection. [u] By the Moſaical law, as a degree of holineſs was conveyed to every thing that touched what was dedicated to God's ſervice, ſo likewiſe legal impurity was contracted by the touch of any thing unclean: and this law of impurity is thus beautifully applied by the prophet *Haggai* —[w] *If one touch any of theſe,* things holy,

[s] *Heb.* xi. 2. 4.
[t] *Tit.* i. 15.
[u] *Levit.* vi. 27.
[w] *Hag.* ii. 13, 14.

ſhall it be unclean? And the prieſt anſwered and ſaid, it ſhall be unclean. Then anſwered Haggai and ſaid, ſo is this people and ſo is this nation before me, ſaith the Lord; and ſo is every work of their hands, and that which they offer is unclean. [x] The want of true faith and inward obedience to God's command (which they ſhewed by the manner in which they performed that very command) made all their actions, nay even the ſacrifices which they offered on his altar, hateful and unacceptable.

A religious motive and reverence to the divine authority were eſteemed by the Jews ſo eſſential to a good action, that it was a received maxim among them, that *he who obeys any command of God, but not in his*

[x] The building of the temple, which had been obſtructed by the *Samaritans*, and totally ſtopped by an order from *Artaxerxes*, as the monarch then reigning is called by *Ezra*. Upon his death the *Jews* obtained a freſh decree from *Darius* his ſucceſſor, and the work was reſumed; but they ſhewed ſuch backwardneſs and indolence in carrying it on, that God puniſhed them with a great drought which blaſted and withered all the fruits of the earth; a curſe, as Mr. *Lowth* judiciouſly obſerves, formerly denounced againſt them for their diſobedience. See *Levit.* xix. 24. *Deut.* xxviii. 23. compared with *Hag.* c. i.

name,

name, ſhall receive no reward. The natural reaſons of this maxim I have conſidered pretty largely; becauſe it is a point in which many well diſpoſed perſons are very apt to miſtake, the eyes of their minds being dazzled by the ſplendor of what are called philoſophical principles: as if God required not the heart as well as the head; as if reaſon, while it is exalted by the contemplation of the nature and relations of things, was debaſed by the remembrance of him who conſtituted that nature and thoſe relations. [y] *Whatſoever ye do,* ſaith the ſcripture, *do all to the glory of God.* [z] *Whatſoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* [a] *Glorify God in your body and in your ſpirit which are God's.* God has an entire right over the whole of us by creation, preſervation, and redemption. When therefore we withdraw any part of us from his ſervice; when we make our own reaſon our ſupreme rule, [b] *going about to eſtabliſh our own righteouſneſs* inſtead of *ſubmitting ourſelves*

[y] 1 *Cor.* x. 31. [z] *Col.* iii. 17.
[a] 1 *Cor.* vi. 20. [b] *Rom.* x. 3.

unto the righteouſneſs of God, we invade his right, we rob him of what belongs to him not only by original propriety, but moreover by ſubſequent purchaſe. And this we are guilty of whenever we glorify him not in our *ſpirit* as well as our body; when our actions, though morally good, proceed not from ſpiritual principles and are not directed to a ſpiritual end. As ſuch actions have no reſpect to God, we cannot expect him to delight in them; and what he does not delight in, he will not reward. The myſtical union between *Chriſt* and his church is repreſented to us in ſcripture by the matrimonial union ſubſiſting between a man and his wife: faith is the bond, and good works reſulting from that faith the fruit of that union: all other fruits are out of wedlock, and conſequently can have no right to the inheritance.

But *ſecondly*, though good works are not of themſelves *ſufficient*, yet are they *neceſſary* to ſalvation; though faith is *neceſſary*, yet it is not of itſelf ſufficient.

When

When *Satan* drew our firſt parents into diſobedience, he very artfully began by inſtilling into their mind doubts concerning the command of God: [c] *Yea, hath God ſaid ye ſhall not eat?* Having once raiſed ſcruples about the law, he boldly urged a total diſbelief of the puniſhment annexed to the breach of it. [d] *Satan ſaid, ye ſhall not ſurely die.* As *incredulity* paved the way to ſin, ſo ſhould *faith* introduce righteouſneſs, and by *obedience* raiſe human nature to that ſtate of excellence from which it was degraded by *diſobedience*. We debaſe religion when we turn it into barren ſpeculation; when we ſtudy the law of God merely out of a deſire of knowledge, without attending to the practical excellencies with which it abounds; when we take delight in the bare act of knowing, and neglect the duties which ought to accompany that knowledge; forgetting that by the *good ground* in the parable of the ſower our Saviour himſelf tells us are meant [e] *they*,

[c] *Gen.* iii. 1.
[d] *Gen.* iii. 4.
[e] *Luke* viii. 15.

who

who not only hear the word, but *in an honeſt and good heart having heard it keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*

It is an acknowledged axiom among thoſe who believe any religion at all, that the firſt principle in religion is to endeavour *to imitate the deity*. It has its foundation in nature: both our affections and reaſon perſuade us to aim at attaining thoſe excellencies which we admire in others: even ſelf-love aſſiſts us in performing this duty. No perſon of any ſentiment can reflect on any advances, which his nature makes towards a ſimilitude to the moſt perfect of all beings, without the higheſt complacency and delight. This pleaſure is greatly encreaſed by the additional reflection, that he is fulfilling the end of his creation, and acquiring the friendſhip and favour of him whoſe favour and friendſhip is man's higheſt felicity and honour. [f] God cannot but behold with approbation

[f] Τίς τράξις φέλη κ) ἀκόλεθ@· θεῷ; μία, κ) ἕνα ἔχεσα ἀρχαῖον λόγον, ὅτι τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον φίλον ἂν εἴη. *Plat. de Leg.* l. 4. Ἐκείνες προσδεχεσθαι αὐτὸν δεδιδάγμεθα κ) πεπείσμεθα κ) πιςέυομεν τὲς τὰ πρόσοπα αὐτῷ ἀγαθὰ μιμουμένους, σωφροσύνη, κ) δικαιοσύνη, κ) φιλανθρώπιαν, κ) ὅσα οἰκεῖα θεῷ ἐςί.

in

in his rational creatures, every degree of conformity to that everlasting holiness and righteousness which, being essential to his nature, constantly and invariably determine his actions; and are therefore made the rule and the motive of theirs. With this view he created man in his own image. To renew this image, after it had been defaced by sin, has been the gracious purpose of all his dispensations. When he selected to himself a peculiar people, this was the general preface and introduction to the laws which he prescribed, [g] *ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.* And this declaration of God's will is particularly applied by [h] St. *Peter* to the Christian religion; the true professors of which are said [i] *to have put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of him who created him*; [k] *which after God,* κατὰ Θεὸν after the similitude of God, *is created in righteousness and true holiness.* For this purpose he sent down [l] *the express image of his person,*

[g] *Levit.* xix. 2.
[h] 1 *Pet.* i. 16.
[i] *Coloss.* iii. 10.
[k] *Ephes.* iv. 24.
[l] *Heb.* i. 2.

that

that we might have a *visible* pattern and example of those excellencies and perfections which we are required to imitate; that by the exercise of Christian virtues upon Christian principles we might [m] *be conformed to the image of the Son of God*, [n] *be made partakers of the divine nature*, and from a likeness to *Christ* in holiness now be made like unto him in glory hereafter.

As [o] *the Law was our School-master to bring us to Christ*, so is the Gospel our teacher by which we are trained up for the kingdom of heaven. The duties which it prescribes are not only a necessary *condition*, but moreover a necessary *qualification* for it. [p] *Nothing that defileth can in any wise enter into heaven.* Every impurity alienates the mind from God and from every thing that is spiritual and holy. How then can a soul defiled with sin be a fit companion for those spirits, who are ever employed in the contemplation and adoration of that holy

[m] *Rom.* viii. 29.
[n] 2 *Pet.* i. 4.
[o] *Gal.* iii. 24.
[p] *Rev.* xxi. 27.

Being

Being who [q] *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?* Surely they are ill qualified to join with the bleſſed choir above, whoſe very [r] *prayers are an abomination unto the Lord:* they can be but ill-diſpoſed to pay continual praiſes and thankſgivings to God, who have been always accuſtomed to diſregard his attributes, deſpiſe his wiſdom, reject his mercy, and hold his power and juſtice at defiance. There can be no pleaſure where the object is not ſuited to the faculties that receive it: as therefore a carnal man can never delight in ſpiritual duties, nor he that is immerſed in matter reliſh thoſe that are altogether intellectual: ſo neither can the envious, the revengeful, and the malicious (without a miracle wrought in their favour) become capable ſubjects of that happineſs which conſiſts of peace and univerſal benevolence. For [s] *what fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs?* What communion or agreement can envy, malice, hatred, and revenge have with charity, goodneſs, and

[q] *Habac.* i. 13. [r] *Prov.* xxviii. 9.
[s] 2 *Cor.* vi. 14.

love?

love? They are as oppoſite as darkneſs to light, as *Belial* to *Chriſt*. We muſt lay the foundation of our ſpiritual building on earth, if we mean to have it finiſhed and perfected in heaven: we muſt perform good works in this world, if we wiſh to enjoy the reward belonging to them in the next.

When the lawyer aſked our Saviour [t] *what he muſt do to inherit eternal life*, the only rule which he preſcribed to him was *obedience*. *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*. Chriſtianity does not exempt us from any moral duty. Some of the circumſtances indeed of the moral law are abrogated: but its ſubſtance and authority ſtill remain and will for ever remain in full force. [u] *It is eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs than one tittle of the law to fail*. The ſame ſins are forbidden, the ſame virtues required, the ſame duties recommended and enjoined in the goſpel and in the law; but not on the ſame terms. The law conſidered as a covenant of works

[t] *Matt.* xix. 16, 17. [u] *Luke* xvi. 17.

admitted

admitted of no mitigation: but under the goſpel, which is a covenant of grace, repentance reſtores the tranſgreſſor to the favour of God, and inſtead of perfect exactneſs, the ſincere endeavours of a true believer are through the merits of *Chriſt* accepted.

But does not this diſſolve our obligation to obedience? God forbid: on the contrary it makes the obligation ſtricter. We are not only bound by the authority of God's injunction, but by the expreſs command of our Redeemer and Mediator; we have a clearer knowledge of our duty, and the aſſiſtance of the holy ſpirit to perform it: we have better and more explicit promiſes, and fuller aſſurances of reward. Every wilful tranſgreſſion under ſuch advantages acquires an additional degree of guilt; and therefore our Saviour tells us that [w] *except our righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, we ſhall in no wiſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.* They had reſpect only to the *out-*

[w] *Matth.* v. 20.

ward

ward deed; whereas in a Chriſtian *inward* intention and purity of heart are required: they made the applauſe of men and their own credit the principle and end of their actions; but to a true Chriſtian the glory of God is the end; love, obedience, and faith in his promiſes the principles and motives of righteouſneſs. Hence is Chriſtian obedience ſtiled the [x] *work of faith and* the *labour of love*. Chriſtian *faith* is a vital and operative habit of mind; it works powerfully upon every faculty, quickens every grace, and makes our obedience willing, eaſy, and conſtant. *Love* is a paſſion of the mind which excites us to action; it follows with pleaſure, purſues with vigour, and promotes with unwearied application the intereſt and honour of its object: our affections are no ſooner fixed upon any particular perſon, but our thoughts and deſires are immediately eager and reſtleſs after opportunities of ſhewing our reverence and eſteem; we ſtudy to pleaſe, we try all methods to oblige him, we receive his commands with pleaſure, and

[x] 1 *Theſſ.* i. 3.

we

we execute them with chearfulneſs. Every motive to love afforded by the goſpel is likewiſe a motive for obedience. [r] *If you love me keep my commandments.* As obedience without love is ſlavery; ſo love without obedience is but an abſtracted, wild, and fruitleſs ſpeculation, without any foundation in reaſon and the nature of things. For "what is rational *love*, but a *deſire to* "*pleaſe* the perſon beloved, and a *compla-* "*cency* and ſatisfaction *in pleaſing him?* "To love God therefore is to have a ſin- "cere *deſire of obeying his laws*, and *a de-* "*light* or pleaſure *in the conſcience of that* "*obedience.*" Men's practices are the beſt indexes of their principles. If the love of God was firmly rooted in the heart, it would ſoon ſhew its power and efficacy by ſpringing up into action and abounding in every duty, in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth. And hence (becauſe theſe two principles of *faith* and *love* are the main ſprings of all our good actions) our obedience by a figure of ſpeech naming the cauſe alone, where together with it the

[r] *John* xiv. 15.

effect is intended and underſtood—by this figure, I ſay, our obedience to the laws and commands of God are often in ſcripture expreſſed by our *faith* in him, our *love* of him, and by other cauſes and principles which produce or chiefly concur in producing that obedience. But if love and faith are the principal cauſes of good works; then ſurely Chriſtians, who have ſuch ſuperior motives to love God and have faith in him, are of courſe under greater obligations to a ſincere, conſtant, and univerſal obedience. Without that our love is hypocriſy, our faith nothing more than an hiſtorical or dogmatical belief, and ſo far from ſaving will condemn us. [z] *For if we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins. He that deſpiſed Moſes's law died without mercy under two or three witneſſes. Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified an unholy thing,*

[z] *Heb.* x. 26. 28, 29.

and

and hath done deſpight unto the ſpirit of grace?

The goſpel is a covenant of mercy, and alſo a law of obedience. *Jeſus Chriſt* is our Lord as well as Saviour: he came into the world to reſcue us from the *dominion* as well as the *puniſhment* of ſin; [a] *that we being delivered from our enemies might ſerve him without fear in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the days of our life.* [b] *He gave himſelf* (ſays St. *Paul*) *that he might redeem us from all iniquity.* It was by no means the deſign of *Chriſt* to tolerate the practice of ſin, or abate men any part of their moral duty: on the contrary he has adopted and perfected the moral law; and having made it a ſtandard and rule of obedience to himſelf, he has, as lord and lawgiver, enjoined the ſtrict obſervance of it, under the title of his commandments, to his diſciples as an indiſpenſible condition of eternal happineſs. [c] *Chriſt is the author of eternal ſalvation unto all them,* and them only, *who*

[a] *Luke* i. 74. [b] *Tit.* ii. 14.
[c] *Heb.* v. 9.

obey him; who pay him an actual and positive obedience and service. [d] The man who *hid his talent in a napkin* was condemned for neglect of duty; not because he had squandered it away, but because he had not improved it. [e] The barren *fig-tree*, an emblem of those who content themselves with a bare profession, was cursed because it bore only leaves and no fruit; and [f] *every tree, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* No human legislator ever discovered his mind more clearly and fully upon any subject than our divine legislator has upon this. [g] *Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* [h] *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven.* In the sketches which he has been pleased to give us of the great day of retribution, he every where tells us expressly that man should be finally rewarded according to his works; that not only the

[d] *Luke* xix.
[e] *Matth.* xxi. 19.
[f] *Matth.* iii. 2.
[g] *Luke* vi. 46.
[h] *Matth.* vii. 21.

mere

mere name of Chriſtianity, and the naked profeſſion of the faith without the practice of it, but even eminent and extraordinary gifts without obedience to his commands ſhall avail nothing to ſalvation. [i] *Many will ſay unto me in that day Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.* The ſame truth is upon all occaſions declared to us by his embaſſadors. [k] *In them* only, according to St. *Paul, there is no condemnation*; *in them* only is *the righteouſneſs of the law fulfilled, who walk not after the fleſh but after the ſpirit*; *they* only *are the ſons of God, who are led by the ſpirit of God.* [l] St. *James* wrote profeſſedly in defence of this doctrine; and St. *John*, the beloved diſ-

[i] *Matth.* vii. 22, 23. [k] *Rom.* viii. 1, 4, 14.

[l] Many of the ancients (and our moſt excellent Biſhop *Bull* ſubſcribes to their opinion) tell us that the contrary doctrine owed its riſe to a miſinterpretation of ſome paſſages in St. *Paul*; and that againſt this miſinterpretation and the notion conſequent upon it *the Epiſtle of St. James, the firſt of St. John, the ſecond of St. Peter*, and that of *St. Jude* were written.

ciple of *Chriſt*, tells us that [m] *whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.* [n] *Let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteouſneſs is righteous; whoſoever doeth not righteouſneſs is not of God.* And in another place, [o] *Bleſſed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the new Jeruſalem.*

The word which is here rendered by the *Engliſh* word *right* is ἐξουσία; which word, as every one who has the leaſt acquaintance with the *Greek* language muſt know, ſignifies not an *abſolute inherent* right, a right of *merit* (as the church of *Rome* inſolently teaches) but only a right of *permiſſion:* and therefore the paſſage ought to have been rendered, *that they may have liberty, may be permitted, to come to the tree of life.* In every claim of abſolute right there muſt be an equivalence, a natural proportion between the work and the reward. Now what proportion can

[m] 1 *John* ii. 5.
[n] 1 *John* iii. 7. 10.
[o] *Revel.* xxii. 14.

there

there be between a *temporary* obedience and an *eternal* reward? Beſides, our obedience at beſt is but imperfect: and were it perfect yet, as it is our bounden duty to God, it could not of right and juſtice challenge a reward from him to whom it was due. What title then, what right have they *that do God's commandments* to eternal life? I anſwer, a title *by promiſe*, a *ſtipulated federal* right. In every covenant there muſt be conditions; in the covenant made, through the mediation of *Chriſt*, between God and man the condition on the part of man is obedience to God's commands, and to this obedience God on his part has been pleaſed to annex the promiſe of eternal life; and therefore St. *Paul* calls the goſpel [p] *the truth which is after godlineſs in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promiſed.* The ſame veracity and faithfulneſs, which will moſt aſſuredly beſtow the reward upon thoſe who fulfil the conditions, is likewiſe bound to exclude thoſe who neglect the terms of the covenant. To what purpoſe ſhould

[p] *Tit.* i. 1, 2.

men be exhorted to [q] *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, to [r] *live righteouſly ſoberly and devoutly*, to [s] *put on the whole armour of God*, to [t] *put on the new creature which is created after God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*, if after all the *Son* was to extend his merits, and the *Father* accept them in favour of thoſe who will do none of theſe things? Such a ſuppoſition would confound all notions of right and wrong, deſtroy all diſtinction between virtue and vice, and rob God of his truth, his juſtice, and his holineſs—of his *truth*, ſince he has [u] *revealed his wrath againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men who hold faith in unrighteouſneſs*, and hath excluded all ſuch from [w] *any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God:* of his *juſtice* in giving the righteous man's reward to tranſgreſſion and diſobedience: of his *holineſs*, for then [x] *the workers of iniquity would ſtand in his ſight*, [y] *his eyes would behold evil and look on iniquity*.

q *Matth.* iii. 8.
r *Tit.* ii. 12.
s *Epheſ.* vi. 11.
t *Epheſ.* iv. 24.
u *Rom.* i. 18.
w *Epheſ.* v. 5.
x *Pſ.* v. 5.
y *Habac.* i. 13.

I ſcarce

I ſcarce need obſerve how much this doctrine of *the neceſſity of good works* has been controverted in almoſt every age of the church by *ſchoolmen* ſtudious of perplexing clear paſſages with nice metaphyſical ſubtilties and diſtinctions; by weak *ignorant* men fond of uſing ſcripture terms without underſtanding their meaning; and by warm *enthuſiaſts* who find myſteries in the plaineſt phraſes, and then work themſelves up into a belief that to them alone it is given to underſtand myſteries. What can be plainer, when not darkened by words without knowledge, than the true notion of our ſalvation by the grace of God? And yet how has it been miſapplied, without any countenance whatever from ſcripture, to ſupport the doctrine of *unconditional election and reprobation?* a doctrine ſo abſurd that one may well wonder how it could find reception among philoſophers, ſo impious that a ſincere Chriſtian can with difficulty conceive how it ever could prevail among divines: a doctrine deſtructive of the principles of our reaſonable nature and of at leaſt the moral part of divinity,

nity, and contradictory to every covenant which the wisdom and goodness of God has been pleased to make with fallen man. [z] *Walk before me*, said he to *Abraham, and be thou perfect; and I will make my covenant between me and thee.* If *Abraham* was not a free and rational agent capable of breaking as well as keeping this covenant, to what purpose was it made? If his election was unconditional, why does God require conditions of him? And if there is no necessity of faith and obedience, why are they made the express conditions? Why is he so highly commended in the scriptures of the *New Testament*, and proposed as a pattern of faith and obedience to all Christians? When God afterwards made a covenant with the *Jews*, [a] *Moses read the book of the covenant in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient.* When *Joshua* renewed it again, the people said [b] *The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.* Does it not from

[z] *Genes.* xvii. 1, 2.
[a] *Exod.* xxiv. 7.
[b] *Josh.* xxiv. 24.

these

theſe promiſes and aſſeverations evidently follow that they were conſcious of an elective principle within themſelves; of faculties competent to act as well as intend, to perform as well as promiſe; of powers ſufficient to denominate their good actions their own, and give their loyal obedience a title to the favour and protection of God? The ſame obſervation may be made of the covenant of grace; the many paſſages which I have cited, wherein good works are required of Chriſtians, being a plain and full proof that as we are rational creatures capable of acting with deſign and counſel, ſo does God expect that by a proper uſe and application of our faculties that deſign and that counſel ſhould be directed to his honour and glory, and to the performance of thoſe conditions upon which he has made our ſalvation to depend.

The term *grace* (which has given occaſion to this unſeemly notion of juſtification without the uſe of any means whatſoever) implies kindneſs and favour, including in it the idea of a ſuperior who freely and voluntarily

luntarily beſtows that favour. Hence it is uſed in different ſignifications and for different gifts, when applied to different perſons and on different occaſions; but when uſed in general without a reference to any particular inſtance, the *free grace of God* has only two ſignifications. It means either that ſpecial act of his mere goodneſs whereby he was pleaſed, without any obligation on his part or claim on ours, to reſtore us to his favour through the ſatisfaction of a Redeemer: or it means that other act of undeſerved mercy whereby God, for the ſake of our Saviour and thro' the intervention of his merits, will accept of ſincerity inſtead of perfection, of a hearty and honeſt inſtead of a ſinleſs and unerring obedience. In the *firſt* ſenſe we are ſaid to be [c] *juſtified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt*; and in the *latter* to be [d] *juſtified by grace, not of works.*

Theſe are not the only paſſages out of the writings of St. *Paul* which have been

[c] *Rom.* iii. 24. [d] *Epheſ.* ii. 8, 9.

made

made ſubſervient to the introduction of dangerous errors concerning this important doctrine. He has ſaid in ſeveral places that [e] *man is juſtified by faith without the deeds of the law:* and from hence many even learned men (without paying the leaſt attention to the numberleſs other poſitive texts of ſcripture, and to the nature of that faith and thoſe works which are here mentioned) have cried down the neceſſity of good works, and attributed the whole of our *juſtification* to *faith alone*; as if evangelical obedience was no part of the evangelical covenant; and men might in contradiction to the direct words of our Saviour [f] *enter into life* without keeping the commandments. The works which the apoſtle excludes from any ſhare in our juſtification he himſelf calls in expreſs terms *the deeds of the law:* for the right underſtanding of which it is neceſſary to obſerve that the converted *Jews* had brought into Chriſtianity all their prejudices in favour of the *Moſaical* law, and urged the neceſ-

[e] *Rom.* iii. 28.—v. 1. *Gal.* ii. 16.—iii. 24.
[f] *Matt.* xix. 17.

ſity

ſity of ſtrictly adhering to all its rites and ceremonial performances. Againſt theſe patrons of *legal* ſervitude the apoſtle of the *Gentiles* every where aſſerts [g] *the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath ſet us free*; and, in order to ſet forth and vindicate the ſuperior excellence and pre-eminence of the goſpel, he ſtrongly preſſes and inculcates the doctrine of *juſtification by faith in Jeſus Chriſt:* i. e. by the *Evangelical* in oppoſition to the *Moſaical* diſpenſation. But he does not any where oppoſe faith to works of righteouſneſs which are founded in *Chriſt*; he no where tells us that man is juſtified by a mere ſolitary belief; that an empty ſpeculative faith, an aſſurance, a reliance and recumbence on *Chriſt*; that laying hold on the ſkirts of his garments and wrapping ourſelves up with his righteouſneſs will be ſufficient to place us in the number of the righteous, and qualify us for the kingdom of heaven. Alas! this is not faith but folly, this is not hope but preſumption. Why has God made us capable of moral influences, if we are not

[g] *Gal.* v. 1.

ſubject

ſubject to moral duties? Why has he implanted ſuch an active principle in us, and promiſed us the additional aſſiſtance of his holy ſpirit, if that principle is uſeleſs, that aſſiſtance unneceſſary? Great things indeed are ſpoken of faith; but they are ſpoken of a true Chriſtian faith; which is the cauſe and ſpring of Chriſtian piety, which implies and includes within it the whole and entire condition of the goſpel.

It is worthy of obſervation how careful St. *Paul* is, leſt we ſhould have any other notion of the faith which he ſo much extols. Does he tell the *Galatians* that [h] *in Jeſus Chriſt neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love?* Leſt his meaning though clearly enough expreſſed ſhould notwithſtanding be miſtaken, he more fully explains himſelf in a parallel paſſage to the *Corinthians*— [i] *Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God.* Is *Chriſt* in one

[h] *Gal.* v. 6. [i] 1 *Cor.* vii. 19.

place

place ſtiled by him [k] *the Saviour of all eſpecially thoſe that believe?* he is in another called [l] *the author of eternal ſalvation unto all them that obey him.* He recommends and urges the practice of righteouſneſs by every motive that can influence a Chriſtian. Even in the midſt of that diſcourſe, on which the *ſolifidians* ſo much rely, he draws an argument in favour of good works from that very faith which is ſet up in oppoſition to them. [m] *We are buried with him by baptiſm into death; that, as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.* As the bad lives of believers reflect diſhonour upon God and his religion, ſo the beſt ſecurity of the honour of Chriſtianity is a ſtrict obſervance of its laws: he therefore exhorts us to ſhew ourſelves [n] *patterns of good works, that he that is of a contrary part may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of us—that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things—* [o] *that we may*

[k] 1 *Tim.* iv. 10.
[l] *Heb.* v. 9.
[m] *Rom.* vi. 4.
[n] *Tit.* ii. 7, 8. 10.
[o] *Phil.* ii. 15.

be

be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebuke. He preſſes them from their ſuitableneſs to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and (that powerful motive of obedience the will of God. [p] *Let your converſation be as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt.* [q] *Walk as the children of light (for the fruit of the ſpirit is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.* [r] *For this is the will of God even your ſanctification.* They are our calling, the great end and deſign of the goſpel revelation. [s] *God hath not called us unto uncleanneſs but unto holineſs.* [t] *This is a*

[p] *Phil.* i. 27. [q] *Epheſ.* v. 8, 9, 10.
[r] 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 3. [s] 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 7.
[t] *Tit.* iii. 8. Two learned men, *Grotius* and Dr. *Hammond*, contend that St. *Paul* by his exhortation *to maintain good works*, means no more than that Chriſtians ſhould follow ſome honeſt labour and vocation. This opinion the latter endeavours to eſtabliſh by remarking that the word ἐργάζεσθαι is always uſed by the apoſtle to ſignify bodily labour: but as ἐργάζεσθαι is not the term made uſe of in this paſſage; this criticiſm, however true, cannot prove what is intended by it. The apoſtle had in the foregoing verſes ſpoken of our juſtification by the *free grace* and mercy of God in *Jeſus Chriſt*. Leſt therefore this doctrine ſhould be abuſed, he here immediately gives a ſtrict and ſolemn charge to *Titus* to preſs the neceſſity of *good works* upon all thoſe who embrace the goſpel. The concluſion drawn by the two great men before mentioned does by no means correſpond with the premiſes. Can any one ſeriouſly imagine that St. *Paul* would in ſo ſolemn a manner uſher in

faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they, which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. [u] *Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* Moreover, as if these motives were not sufficient, he every where makes the practice of moral duties an absolute condition of salvation. [w] *The wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.* [x] *Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* [y] *The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* [z] *Fol-*

a matter of such mean consequence; and set forth the wonderful love of God in the great work of our redemption merely to infer from it, that men ought to be careful to employ themselves in some honest trade or calling? As to *Grotius's* interpretation of καλῶν ἔργων προΐσασθαι *præesse bonis operibus*—it is surely more agreeable to the context, more worthy of apostolical advice, and more honourable for Christians, that they should be patterns and precedents of holiness, the chief and foremost, eminent and remarkable above all others in the discharge of moral and religious duties, than that they should be examples of diligence and industry, presiding and looking over their families in the exercise of a trade however honest and useful.

[u] *Tit.* ii. 13, 14.
[w] *Rom.* i. 18.
[x] *Ephes.* v. 6.
[y] 1 *Cor.* vi. 9.
[z] *Heb.* xii. 14.

low

low holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

Upon the whole then St. *Paul* evidently concurs with the other apoſtles in carrying on with the greateſt uniformity the cauſe of evangelical righteouſneſs, to which alone our Saviour has annexed the reward of eternal happineſs. This righteouſneſs (as has, I flatter myſelf, been abundantly proved) conſiſts in *faith in Chriſt and obedience to his commands.* Theſe will through the grace of God and the ſatisfaction of *Chriſt* aſſuredly and effectually procure our juſtification and ſalvation: through the *Grace of God* I ſay, as the *principal efficient* cauſe by which fallen man is reſtored to his favour; through the *ſatisfaction of Chriſt,* as the *meritorious* cauſe for the ſake of which God pardons, juſtifies, and beſtows eternal life upon thoſe who ſincerely perform the conditions of *faith* and *obedience* required in the evangelical covenant.

It ill becomes us to pry too curiouſly into and dogmatically pronounce upon

God's ſecret decrees: but it is every man's bounden duty, written in plain characters upon the mind of every man, to obey with awe and reverence his expreſs commands. Scripture cannot be at varience with itſelf. We ought therefore ſo to temper the ſenſe of paſſages ſeemingly contradictory, as to rob neither of that honour and ſubmiſſion which is due to every part of the word of God. When therefore ſalvation is aſcribed to his *free grace*, we ought to conclude that *our own endeavours* are ſuppoſed to co-operate with it: when we are exhorted to *work* out our own ſalvation, we ought not to exclude the concurrence of his *grace*, by which [a] *his ſtrength is made perfect in our weakneſs*. When we are ſaid to be juſtified through *faith*, we ſhould underſtand ſuch a faith as is productive of *good works*: when we read of the glorious promiſes made to *good works*, we muſt confine them to ſuch works only as ſpring from a true lively *faith* in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

[b] *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put aſunder*. Let us not ſo abuſe

[a] 2 *Cor.* xii. 9. [b] *Matt.* xix. 6.

the

the *mercy* of God as to refuſe him our *obedience:* let us not think ſo highly of our obedience as to depreciate his mercy. Let us [c] *acknowledge the truth which is after godlineſs*; ſo entirely depend upon the grace of God and the merits of our Saviour, as if our own endeavours were altogether inſignificant and uſeleſs; and be at the ſame time ſo active and laborious in the ways of righteouſneſs and holineſs, as if we were able by the ſtrength and power of nature alone to [d] *work the works of God*, and [e] *lay hold on eternal life*. *Finally* therefore (to conclude with the words with which I began) *Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.*

[c] *Tit.* i. 1.
[d] *John* vi. 28.
[e] 1 *Tim.* vi. 12.

A Vindication of St. Paul *from the Charge of wiſhing himſelf accurſed:*

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

ROM. ix. 2, 3.

I have great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in my heart. For I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed from Chriſt for my brethren.

THERE is ſomething ſo exceedingly unnatural in the wiſh ſuppoſed to be contained in this portion of ſcripture, that notwithſtanding all the pains taken by learned and pious men to explain and qualify it, I cannot be induced to think that it ever proceeded from the great Apoſtle to whom it is attributed. The very ſubject he is treating of ſeems to me a moſt evi-

a If any perſon is deſirous of knowing the different modes of explaining and qualifying this paſſage hitherto attempted, let him conſult *Witſius*'s Diſſertation upon it in the 2d volume of his *Miſcellanea Sacra*.

dent

dent and abſolute demonſtration to the contrary. In the preceding chapter he ſets forth the glorious privileges of God's elect: it begins with a triumphant declaration that [b] *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, and ends in the ſame exulting ſtrain, with a firm perſuaſion [c] *that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Can it be imagined that he would in the very next ſentence wiſh to be cut off from that ſalvation on which he dwells with ſuch rapturous ardency of expreſſion? Could he, who was taught Chriſtianity by *Chriſt* himſelf, conceive that his own damnation could in any wiſe contribute to the glory of God or the happineſs of his brethren? Such a ſuppoſition ſurely is abſurd and impious: and however the words are modified into a figurative hyperbolical expreſſion, denoting the fervency of his zeal and affection;

[b] C. viii. 1. [c] V. 38, 39.

how-

however qualified into an hypothetical or conditional enuntiation, ſignifying only that were it poſſible or proper he *could wiſh to be accurſed from Chriſt*; they ſtill ſeem to contain in them matter at which human nature ſhudders, againſt which right reaſon and Chriſtianity revolt.

To reſcue the Apoſtle from the imputation of ſo extravagant a declaration is my deſign in the following diſcourſe: in order to which I ſhall endeavour to prove that his words have in reality a very different meaning; and confirm the expoſition which I ſhall give of them by ſhewing (from a few obſervations on the character of the *Jews*, that of St. *Paul*, and the *doctrines* here treated of) that it tends to illuſtrate the whole tenour of the Apoſtle's argument, and the peculiar manner in which he enforces it upon the prepoſſeſſions and prejudices of thoſe whom he addreſſes.

[d] The paſſage, as it now ſtands, is in-

[d] St *Paul*, as his manner is (ſays father *Simon*) expreſſes himſelf in ſo few words, that we muſt ſupply ſomething to ſhew the cauſe of his great ſorrow; which the words that follow ſeem to point at.

con-

concluſive: it declares the Apoſtle's great uneaſineſs and ſorrow; but makes no mention of the cauſe or object of it. This may be remedied by uniting the two verſes into one period, and throwing that part of it which we render *I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed from Chriſt*, into a parentheſis: for then the context will be full and explicit—*I have great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in my heart for, or on account of my brethren*. The ſentence, which I diſmember as it were from the reſt, runs thus in the original ἠυχόμην γὰρ αὐτὸς ἔγω εἶναι ἀνάθεμα ἀπὸ τοῦ χριϛοῦ. The word ἠυχόμην does not ſeem to me to be *potential*, but barely to denote ſomething which the Apoſtle had formerly done; neither do I conceive the leaſt idea of a wiſh annexed to it in this place. It does undoubtedly often ſignify *to wiſh* or *pray for:* [e] it moreover ſignifies

[e] ἔυχεαι, λέγεις—ἔυχεσθαι, λέγειν—ἐυχόμεθα, φαμέν. *Heſych.* σημαίνειδὲ τὸ κυρίως λέγειν καὶ ἁπλῶς. ἀγχιάλοιο δαΐφρονος ἔυχόμαι εἶναι υἱὸς—ἔυχετο δ' ἔξ Ιθάκης ἔμεναι. *Etym. Magn.* The Lexicons will ſupply many other inſtances. The word δοκεῖν ſeems to be of a ſomewhat ſimilar nature. Thus οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν *Mark* x. 42. is the ſame as οἱ ἄρχοντες *Matth.* xx. 25. — and οἱ βασιλεῖς *Luke* xxii. 25. Thus in our Apoſtle's *firſt Ep. to the Cor.* vii. 40. δοκῶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν ſignifies *I* have *the ſpirit of God.* ὁ δοκῶν ἑϛάναι, x. 12. *he that*

to *profeſs*, and is likewiſe very frequently *pleonaſtical*. One ſingle ſentence which occurs in almoſt every page of *Homer* will fully explain my meaning. That poet uſually obſerves, upon the introduction of a diſtinguiſhed hero, that διὸς παῖς ἤυχετο εἶναι i. e. *He gloried in being*, or *he profeſſed that he was*, or ſimply *he was the ſon of Jupiter*. St. *Paul*'s phraſeology is exactly the ſame; and therefore I conclude that in the ſame plain, natural, and obvious ſenſe of the word he here declares that *he himſelf once gloried in being*, *he himſelf once profeſſed that he was*, or ſimply *he himſelf once was* ἀνάθεμα ἀπὸ τῦ χριςῦ: for the words αὐτὸς ἔγω ought undoubtedly in the conſtruction immediately to precede ἠυχόμην, not εἶναι, as in our tranſlation; they ſeem moreover to imply that whatever was the Apoſtle's object was alſo the object of thoſe whom he addreſſes, αὐτὸς ἔγω *I myſelf likewiſe as well as you*. This object was ἀνάθεμα εἶναι ἀπὸ τῦ Χριςῦ; which words, according to the [f] authorities cited by Dr. *Whitby* from the

that ſtands. ὁ δοκῶν εἶναι φιλόνεικος xi. 16. *he that* is *contentious* —εἴτις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι, xiv. 37. *if any man* be *a prophet*.

[f] *Orig. Chryſoſt. Theod. Oec. Phot. Theophyl.*

Greek

Greek fathers, are of the ſame import as ἀλλότριον εἶναι τῦ Χριςῦ, χωρισθῆναι τῆς ἀγάπης, ἐκπεσεῖν τῆς δόξης *to be an alien from Chriſt, to be ſeparated from his love, to fall from the glory and ſalvation purchaſed by him.*

The Apoſtle is generally, and I think juſtly, ſuppoſed to have the Jewiſh excommunications in view, and particularly that kind of them called *Cherem,* uſually expreſſed in *Greek* by the word ἀνάθεμα; in which to the deprivation of the commerce and benefits of ſociety were added curſes and execrations, and the perſon upon whom this puniſhment was inflicted [ε] *was utterly deteſted and utterly abhorred, for he was a curſed thing.* To this the Apoſtle alludes, to ſhow the wretchedneſs of *his former* and by implication *their preſent* ſituation. *I myſelf,* ſays he, *likewiſe once was an accurſed thing, an alien from Chriſt, cut off from his love, and excommunicated from all ſhare in the glory and ſalvation purchaſed by him.* And to what ſtate more properly, than that wherein offen-

ε *Deut.* vii. 26.

ders

ders among themſelves were ſtripped of all the honours and bleſſings attending a member of the viſible church—to what ſtate, I ſay, could he more properly compare the rejection of the *Jews*, and their excluſion from the peculiar covenant of God? This was the doctrine he was then entering upon: he had been preparing them for it by laying before them with all the diſplay of language the law's inability to ſave, the ſatisfaction of *Chriſt*, and the ineſtimable value of all the evangelical privileges—Yet he does not even then begin ſo offenſive a ſubject abruptly; he firſt of all endeavours to engage their attention, and beſpeak their good will by a [h] ſolemn aſſeveration of his ſincerity, and an affectionate alluſion to their own kind and tender behaviour towards thoſe whom they looked upon as loſt and dead unto God.

[h] St. *Paul*'s frequent proteſtations of his affection to the *Jews* ſeem ſtrongly to intimate that he was ſuſpected of being an enemy to his own nation, on account of the doctrines which he preached—*viz.* the excluſion of the *Jews*, and the admiſſion of the *Gentiles*—That this was really the caſe we are told by ſeveral of the Fathers—See in particular *Irenæus* l. 1. c. 26. and *Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ.* l. 3. c. 27.

For

[1] For it was a cuſtom among the *Jews* to put on ſolemn mourning, to faſt and humble themſelves, and by every mark of ſorrow ſhew their ſympathy with a perſon laid under a *cherem* or *anathema*, bewailing him as one who was dead. To this cuſtom I apprehend the Apoſtle to refer—*I ſay the truth in Chriſt, I lie not, my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt that I have great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in my heart.* Thus cautiouſly does he proceed before he ventures to declare truths which he knows muſt be diſpleaſing and ungrateful: and yet he here again ſtops ſhort. He was going to declare the reaſon of his ſorrow—*viz.* their being cut off from all ſhare in the ſalvation purchaſed by the *Meſſiah*, their being excommunicated from *Chriſt* as he himſelf

[1] This cuſtom likewiſe obtained in the Chriſtian church. μετὰ λύπης καὶ πένθους ἀνιάτως ἔχουσα τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀπόκοπῆε *cut off from the church a perſon that is incurable with ſorrow and mourning* is one of the *apoſtolical conſtitutions*, l. 2. 41. To this cuſtom St. *Paul* ſeems to allude, 1 *Cor.* v. 2.—2 *Cor.* ii. 1. 3. and xii. 21. From the *Jews Pythagoras* in all probability borrowed the cuſtom mentioned by *Jamblicus* in his life, c. 17. by *Clem. Alex. Strom* 5. and by *Origen* p. 67—142. of putting up cenotaphs in his ſchool in the room of thoſe who had deſerted it.

once

once was: yet he here again ſtops ſhort, and by an elegant tranſition turns for a moment the diſcourſe from *them*, and names no offender but *himſelf*; yet in ſuch a manner as by ſtrong though delicate inſinuation to imply their being involved in the ſame miſery: and when he does mention them as the object of his grief and affliction, he does it by the endearing title of *brethren*, accompanied with a recital of the gracious reſpects with which they were favoured beyond any other nation under heaven. *I have great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in my heart (for I myſelf likewiſe once was an excommunicate outcaſt from Chriſt) on account of my brethren, my kinſmen according to the fleſh: who are Iſraelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law; and the ſervice of God, and the promiſes; whoſe are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt came; who is over all God bleſſed for ever.* Amen.

[k] There is in the hiſtory of the *Jews*

[k] See *Cunæus de Rep. Heb.* l. 2. c. 17.

among many others this one very remarkable circumſtance; that whereas before the Babyloniſh captivity there were no eccleſiaſtical ſchiſms but frequent apoſtacies, on the contrary after that period we read of no apoſtacies, but numberleſs ſchiſms, various and dangerous hereſies. While the ſpirit of prophecy dwelled among them, and God could be on all occaſions conſulted, there was no room for diſputes or controverſies; God muſt either be implicitly obeyed, or totally renounced. But when his more immediate interpoſition was withdrawn, and the church committed to the care of a ſtanding miniſtry; prophetical and oracular declarations of his will (thoſe great glories of the firſt temple) were ſucceeded by the precarious comments of their doctors, revelation by opinion. Hence aroſe various ſects, each of which with a partiality too common to human nature, cheriſhed their own offspring; liſtened with more complacency, and adhered with more zeal to the ſuggeſtions of their own fancy, than they had ever done to the oracles of thoſe infallible guides, whom God had ſet over them. Yet the remembrance

of

of the grievous calamities they had ſuffered ſo effectually wrought upon them, that there appeared under the ſecond temple no traces of that proneneſs to idolatry, which had brought down the ſevereſt of God's judgements upon their church and nation. Add to this that the different ſects having, or pretending to have, the law for their baſis, every one of them however differing in all other points agreed notwithſtanding in this, *viz.* that every part of it whether moral, judicial, or ceremonial, was of eternal and immutable obligation; and we muſt do them the juſtice to acknowledge, that in [1] many inſtances they bore with heroic firmneſs the cruelleſt perſecutions rather than depart from the leaſt tittle of it. This law their forefathers had received from the hand of God himſelf; with them he had made a covenant, and had adopted the whole nation; where-

1 Particularly under *Ptolemy Philepator*; when out of many thouſand *Jews*, which dwelt at *Alexandria*, only three hundred forſook their God to gain the favour of the king. The reſt, though at the danger of their lives, ſtood all firm to the religion of their forefathers, and expreſſed the utmoſt abhorrence of the apoſtacy of their brethren. See *Prideaux*'s *Connection, part* 2. *book* 2.

by they became his [m] *peculiar people*, his [n] *firſt born*, the [o] *heirs of the promiſes*. Entrenched within theſe glorious privileges they thought themſelves ſecure, whilſt they maintained the outworks of ritual obſervances; and adhering to the rigour of the letter looked upon the favour of God as their own peculiar and indefeaſible inheritance, fondly appropriating to themſelves excluſively of all other nations, the promiſed bleſſings. But now the [p] *partition wall* was *broken down*, ſalvation preached to the Gentiles, and every one who profeſſed faith in *Chriſt* equally admitted into the covenant of grace. To explain this important point St. *Paul* enters largely into the true nature of the Jewiſh oeconomy and of the covenant made with *Abraham*; proving to them by the ſtrongeſt arguments that it was not made in conſequence of the law or of circumciſion; and that, as all the natural deſcendants of *Abraham* were not comprehended in the promiſe, ſo neither was it limited to *them* only; but that all, of whomſoever deſcend-

[m] *Deut.* xiv. 2. [n] *Exod.* iv. 22.
[o] *Heb.* vi. 17. [p] *Epheſ.* ii. 14.

ed,

ed, who followed the ſteps of the father of the faithful, were *that ſpiritual* ſeed to whom the promiſe was made. The admiſſion therefore of the believing *Gentiles* into the kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was a fulfilling of the promiſe, every title to which the *Jews* had forfeited by their infidelity, and rendered themſelves incapable of the bleſſings by refuſing the terms of acceptance and ſalvation which God himſelf had propoſed.

So harſh and unpleaſing a doctrine required great ſkill and management. We have already obſerved how cautiouſly the Apoſtle introduces it; he employs the ſame tenderneſs and addreſs throughout, with ſuch arguments as refute their extravagant claims, mixing ſuch topics, as in ſome degree flattered their pride and prepoſſeſſion. He allows and magnifies their high prerogatives and advantages; and, whilſt he urges the ſtability of God's promiſes, he raiſes their hopes and expectations, by ſhewing that their rejection was neither total nor final, but that he had according to his free and gracious purpoſe

reſerved a remnant, and would in his own good time reſtore the whole nation to the glorious title of the *people of God.* That this comfortable aſſurance might leave the ſtronger impreſſion upon their minds, and induce them to fulfil the counſel of God's goodneſs by their obedience, he cloſes with it the argumentative part of his diſcourſe: but he does not entirely reſerve it for that period; he touches upon it in the words which I have ſubmitted to your conſideration, uniting himſelf, to preſs his argument the ſtronger, familiarly with them—*I myſelf likewiſe was once an excommunicate outcaſt from Chriſt*—wherein he not only applies his former ſituation to their preſent caſe, but likewiſe repreſents to them by his example the method and aſſurance of recovering God's favour.

And what more forcible example could he ſet before them? who could with more propriety attack their prejudices than he, who was known to have [q] imbibed thoſe

[q] With theſe particulars (and he appeals to the *Jews* for the truth of them) St. *Paul* begins his defence before *Agrippa*, *Acts* xxvi; that having thus previouſly ſecured the attention and prepoſſeſſion of his hearers, he might urge

prejudices from his infancy; who had been educated and brought up in the ſtricteſt ſect among them, had been remarkable for his more exceeding zeal for their religion and the bittereſt enmity againſt Chriſtianity? Who could with more energy and conviction lay before them the [r] *exceeding riches of God's grace*, than he who to a more immediate and extraordinary operation of *that* grace owed his converſion and call to the apoſtleſhip? It is indeed a theme which he ſo particularly delights in, that one of the fathers has not ſcrupled to call him the *angel* or *meſſenger* of grace.

It is remarked of St. *John* the beloved diſciple of *Chriſt*, that he ſeems to be inſpired with a more generous affection, a

urge, with more confidence of gaining credit, the extraordinary manner in which he was converted. He had uſed the ſame addreſs before in his defence to the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem*, c. 22. *I am a Jew, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, and I perſecuted this way unto the death, as alſo the high prieſt doth bear me witneſs, and all the eſtate of the elders, from whom I received letters and went to Damaſcus; and it came to paſs*, &c.

[r] *Epheſ.* ii. 7.

more fervent *charity*, than the reſt of the Apoſtles: full of that divine principle, by which he had been peculiarly diſtinguiſhed, he urges it through all his epiſtles as the primary and eſſential law of Chriſtianity; his diſcourſes ſpeak nothing, breathe nothing but love and *charity*. In like manner our Apoſtle, who had felt ſuch powerful effects of God's *grace*, by which he had in a moment from a blaſphemer been transformed into a ſaint, from a perſecutor into a paſtor, from an inſtrument of vengeance and death into a herald of peace and life—Our Apoſtle, I ſay (as if every faculty of his ſoul was entirely poſſeſſed by that glorious attribute from whoſe aſtoniſhing and more ſpecial influence he derived his ſpiritual being) takes every where occaſion to extol and magnify the riches and the treaſures of *grace*; he dwells upon it in this diſcourſe with all the rapture of holy gratitude, till loſt in the unfathomable ocean of God's counſels, by which his ſevereſt judgements conclude at laſt in mercy, he breaks out in *that* extatic exclamation which cloſes the whole argument

ment—[s] *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and the knowledge of God!* &c.

From the warmth of St. *Paul*'s temper ſome learned men have been led into a ſuppoſition that [t] he was prefigured by the patriarch *Jacob* in his prophecy concerning *Benjamin*, to whoſe tribe the Apoſtle belonged. [u] *Benjamin ſhall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he ſhall devour the prey, and at night he ſhall divide the ſpoil.*

I own I cannot diſcover the propriety of the application: I think with [w] one of the brighteſt ornaments of our church that I ſee *better things* in the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles, [x] *and things that accompany*

[s] *Rom.* xi. 33.

[t] This was St. *Auſtin*'s opinion, as he tells us himſelf *in Nat. Mart. ſerm.* 333. *de Paulo Apoſt.* 279.

[u] *Geneſ.* xlix. 27. The fierce temper of this tribe, deſcribed under the character of a *wolf*, ſhewed itſelf on many occaſions, eſpecially in the war which it maintained againſt all the other tribes, *Judg.* xx. The latter part of the prophecy I take to have been verified in the equal right which that tribe had with *Judah* to the city of *Jeruſalem*, its adherence with it to the line of *David*, and forming in conjunction with it, after the diſperſion of the ten tribes, the whole nation of the *Jews*.

[w] Mr. *Mede*.

[x] *Heb.* vi. 9.

ſal-

ſalvation. I cannot perſuade myſelf but I read repreſented in him the outlines of that myſterious diſpenſation which we are conſidering. His zeal for Judaiſm, his enmity againſt Chriſtianity, his miraculous and ſudden converſion, the extraordinary gifts and ſpecial revelations vouchſafed to him in conſequence of it, his being appointed the chief inſtrument in the hand of God for the converſion of the Gentiles are, if not emblems of, at leaſt very applicable to God's dealings with the whole Jewiſh nation.

[y] Among the various methods by which God was pleaſed to inſtruct his people under the law, he often made uſe of that of *ſimilitude*; the prophet aſſuming different emblematical characters, which they applying to themſelves might be made ſenſible of their condition and God's impending judgments. Thus [z] *Jeremiah* and

[y] *I have ſpoken by the prophets; and I have multiplied viſions; and* uſed ſimilitudes *by the miniſtry of the prophets.* *Hoſ.* xii. 10. See *Biſhop Chandler's Defence of Chriſtianity, ch.* 3. *ſect.* 1.

[z] *Jerem.* xiii. 27. 32.

Eze-

[a] *Ezekiel* are upon ſeveral occaſions *a ſign unto them*; they preſignify and repreſent by their actions what God had commanded them to declare of his counſels and deſigns. [b] *Hoſea*'s wife and children were patterns and figures of the idolatry, deſolation, and reſtoration of *Iſrael*. [c] *Behold* (ſaith *Iſaiah*) *I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for ſigns and wonders*, i. e. types and ſymbols, *in Iſrael from the Lord of hoſts*. Why may we not be allowed to ſuppoſe that God might, under the ſecond covenant, condeſcend to convey inſtruction in a manner familiarized to them by the frequent miniſtry of his prophets, and raiſe from among them an exemplar of his dealings with them, a viſible pledge of his promiſes, a remembrancer of his veracity and their duty? Might not at leaſt the Apoſtle, [d] eminently ſkilled as he was in their ab-

[a] *Ezek.* iv. 12. 24. [b] See *Hoſ.* c. i. throughout.

[c] *Iſ.* viii. 18.

[d] *It is plain to him that hath carefully read St. Paul's Epiſtles, and is acquainted alſo with the writings of Philo, that the holy Apoſtle well underſtood the cabaliſtical theology of the Jews. Bull's Sermon on 2 Tim.* iv. 13. Father *Simon* ſays that a *Jew*, well verſed in ancient cabaliſtical authors, freely owned to him that the *Epiſtle to the Hebrews* muſt have been written by ſome great *Mekubal* or *maſter of tradition*. Far from charging St. *Paul* with having perverted the

ſtruſer learning, make uſe of the *ſymbolical* method of argumentation in which they ſo much delighted to work upon their affections; and temper the ſeverity of his doctrine by prefiguring to them under his own character, that though they were then *aliens, outcaſts, excommunicated, anathematized from Chriſt,* yet ſhould they again be admitted into the pale of his church, the ſociety and privileges of the faithful? Sure I am that he ſtrongly inſiſts upon this exemplification in the beginning of the *eleventh* chapter. *Hath God caſt away his people? God forbid: for I alſo am an Iſraelite, of the ſeed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not caſt away his people whom he foreknew. Wot ye not what the ſcripture ſaith of Elias, how he maketh interceſſion to God againſt Iſrael? ſaying, Lord they have killed thy prophets and digged down thy altars, and I am left alone, and they ſeek my life. But what ſaith the anſwer of God to him? I have reſerved to myſelf ſeven thou-*

the true ſenſe of ſcripture by his allegories, he highly commended his deep knowledge of the ſublime meaning of the Bible, and was always full of his great *Mekubal,* of whom he never ſpoke but with admiration. *Hiſt. Crit. du* N. T. *p.* 248.

ſand

ſand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even ſo then at this preſent time alſo there is a remnant according to the election of grace. As the Apoſtle here confeſſedly inſtances *Elias* and the ſeven thouſand faithful amidſt a former general defection of the *Jews*, as a proof that God had not abſolutely and without exception rejected his people; ſo likewiſe does he by parity of reaſon inſtance himſelf, hold himſelf forth as a type, as a pledge and earneſt of their future reſtoration, notwithſtanding their preſent national infidelity, to the glorious bleſſings promiſed to their forefathers; when like him they exchange external federation for inward obedience, and accept the covenant of grace by faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*. *For*, as he declares himſelf to his favourite diſciple *Timothy*, [e] *for this cauſe he obtained mercy, that in him firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to eternal life.*

That there will be hereafter a general converſion of the *Jews* to the Chriſtian

[e] 1 *Tim.* i. 16.

faith

faith cannot, I think, be doubted by any one who reads with the leaſt degree of attention the prophecies of the Old and New Teſtament, and particularly what St. *Paul* (who was in à more eſpecial manner intruſted with this myſtery) plainly and profeſſedly declares concerning it in the *eleventh* chapter of this epiſtle. In what manner God will be pleaſed to bring about this gracious diſpenſation is in no part of ſcripture expreſsly revealed; but from the importance of the event we may conclude that the means uſed will be more than ordinary: and this concluſion is confirmed by thoſe paſſages of holy writ which the conſentient opinion of learned and pious men apply to this tranſaction. They plainly indicate ſome ſpecial manifeſtation of God, always repreſenting *Chriſt* as[f] *appear-*

[f] We are told by St. *Luke* in the firſt chapter of the *Acts* that *while the apoſtles beheld, our Saviour was taken up and* a cloud received him *out of their ſight. And—behold two men ſtood by them in white apparel, which alſo ſaid—this ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you into heaven* ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven. Our Saviour himſelf tells us—*Then ſhall appear the ſign of the ſon of man in heaven; and then ſhall all the tribes of the earth mourn*—(compare *Rev.* i. 7. and *Zechar.* xii. 10.) *and they ſhall ſee the ſon of man* coming in the clouds of heaven with power

ing in the clouds (that conſtant ſymbol of the divine preſence) *with power and great glory*. Our Saviour's ſimilar revelation of himſelf to St. *Paul* and the effects wrought by it, were unexpected and inſtantaneous; and we have reaſon to conclude that the converſion of the whole nation of the *Jews* will in like manner be as ſudden and ſurpriſing as the outward means uſed to effect it are extraordinary and miraculous. [g] *I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day*, ſaith God by the mouth of his prophet *Zechariah*.—This is beautifully and emphaticallly expreſſed by the evangelical prophet. [h] *Before ſhe travailed ſhe brought forth; before her pain came, ſhe was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard ſuch a thing? who hath ſeen ſuch things? ſhall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or ſhall a nation be born at once? for as ſoon as Zion travailed, ſhe brought forth her children.* Then will God's promiſes of ſpiritual bleſſings be fulfilled: [i] *God will*

power and great glory. *Matth.* xxiv. 30. See *Mark* xiii. 26. *Luke* xxi. 27. *John* xiv. 3. *Dan.* vii. 13. &c.

[g] *Zechar.* iii. 9.

[h] *Iſ.* lxvi. 7, 8.

[i] *Iſ.* xl. 3. liv. 13.

pour

man ſhall thruſt his ſickle on the earth and the earth be reaped. They were an earneſt that ſalvation ſhall be hereafter univerſally derived to them from *Iſrael,* when [r] *out of Sion ſhall* once more *go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem.* For [s] *if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulneſs? And if the caſting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what ſhall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?*

Theſe myſteries *angels* themſelves [t] *deſire to look into:* they are not vain ſpeculations, but venerable truths; from which (would time permit) many ſublime and important concluſions might be deduced. Even from the obſtinacy of the Jews ſeveral arguments in favour of Chriſtianity might be drawn; the authenticity of holy writ might fairly be inferred from that almoſt incredible care, which their pertinacious attachment to the law induced them to beſtow upon the Scriptures; they not

[r] *Micah.* iv. 2.
[s] *Rom.* xi. 12. 15.
[t] 1 *Pet.* i. 12.

only

only learned them from their childhood, but even reckoned every word, every ſyllable, every letter: thoſe paſſages in particular which relate to the *Meſſiah* are a ſtanding evidence againſt themſelves, and being preſerved and acknowledged as genuine by the avowed enemies of *Chriſt*, cannot be diſputed by any patrons of infidelity.

What a noble ſcheme of juſtice and mercy is diſplayed in God's dealings with his once favourite people? What a forcible leſſon does their rejection read to us againſt ſpiritual pride, ſecurity, and preſumption? What a comfortable argument do God's promiſes of taking them again into favour furniſh us with againſt religious melancholy and deſpair?—The ſame, and other ample matter of uſeful conſideration is afforded us in St. *Paul*'s character both before and after his converſion. We have in his converſation painted in the ſtrongeſt colours the deformity of prejudice, the odiouſneſs of a blind ungovernable zeal, of a fierce perſecuting ſpirit. But how beautifully are theſe contraſted

by a docile obedience to the evidence of truth, affection for his brethren, patience under ſufferings and reproaches for the ſake of *Chriſt*, unwearied diligence in preaching the goſpel, conſtancy and perſeverance in it even unto death?

Theſe topics I might enlarge upon, would time permit, to our mutual ſatisfaction and improvement. And yet, if time *did* permit, I ſhould be unwilling to draw off your attention from *that* glorious ſcene to which I have endeavoured to trace the myſtery of [u] *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*. This is that [w] *manifeſtation of the ſons of God for which the earneſt expectation of the creature waiteth*; that kingdom of God for which our Saviour has commanded us to pray; of whoſe amplitude there ſhall be no bound, of whoſe duration no end; in which [x] *righteouſneſs ſhall dwell*, and [y] *the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.*

[u] *Epheſ.* iii. 8. [w] *Rom.* viii. 19.
[x] 2 *Pet.* iii. 13. [y] *Iſ.* xxxii. 17.

Let

Let us therefore, [z] *who are delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God,* [a] *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,* [b] *in all holy converſation and godlineſs, looking for and haſtening unto the coming of the day of God*; beſeeching him that he would ſhortly accompliſh the number of his elect, have mercy upon all *aliens from Chriſt*, take from them all ignorance, hardneſs of heart and contempt of his word; and ſo bring them home to his flock, that they may be ſaved among the remnant of the true Iſraelites, and be made one fold under one ſhepherd *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the holy ſpirit, one God world without end. *Amen.*

[z] *Rom.* viii. 21. [a] *Epheſ.* iv. 1.
[b] 2 *Pet.* iii. 12.

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